

# ***RUZHONG WU CHENG'EN*** ***THE JOURNEY TO THE WEST***

(Daodejing 41)

The superior student who hears about the Way practices it diligently.  
The middling student who hears about the Way now keeps it and now loses it.  
The inferior student who hears about the Way laughs at it loudly;  
If he did not laugh, it would have fallen short of the Way.



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4. *Appointed a Ban-Horse, could he be content? Named Equal to Heaven, he's still not appeased.*
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29. *Free of his peril, River Float arrives at the kingdom; Receiving favor, Eight Rules invades the forest.*
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37. *The ghost king visits Tripitaka Tang at night; Wukong, through wondrous transformation, leads the child.*
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49. *Tripitaka meets disaster and sinks to a water home; To bring salvation, Guanyin reveals a fish basket.*
50. *Nature follows confused feelings through lust and desire; Faint spirit and moved mind meet a demon chief.*

51. *Mind Monkey in vain uses a thousand tricks; Futile water and fire makes it hard to smelt demons.*
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75. *Young Lord T'ang Accepts an Order to Lead the Troops; Lady Green-twine Becomes a Broken Jade by the Pool.*
76. *The T'ang Priest Musters His Troops Under the Midnight Moon; The Great Sage's Spirit Falts Before the Banners of 5 Colours.*
77. *The Elder of the Void Rouses Monkey from His Dream; When the Great Sage Returns, the Sun Is Half Hidden in the Mountains.*
78. *To wash off filth, to bathe the mind, just sweep a pagoda; To bind demons and return to the lord is self-cultivation.*
79. *Two monks, quelling fiends, disturb the dragon palace; The sages, destroying deviates, acquire the treasures.*
80. *At Bramble Ridge Wuneng exerted great effort; At Shrine of Sylvan Immortals Tripitaka discusses poetry .*
81. *Fiends set up falsely the Small Thunderclap; The four pilgrims all meet a great ordeal.*
82. *Many gods meet injury; Maitreya binds a fiend.*
83. *Having rescued Tuoluo, Chan Nature is secure; Escaping filthiness, the Mind of Dao is pure.*
84. *At Scarlet-Purple Kingdom the Tang Monk speaks of past eras; Pilgrim Sun performs on an arm broken in three places.*
85. *At night the Lord of the Mind refines medicines; At a banquet the king speaks of the perverse fiend.*
86. *The monstrous demon's treasures release smoke, sand, and fire; Wukong by stratagem steals the purple-gold bells.*
87. *By a false name Pilgrim defeats the fiendish wolf; In epiphany Guanyin subdues the monster-king.*
88. *At Cobweb Cave Seven Passions delude the Origin; At Purgation Spring Eight Rules forgets all manners.*
89. *Passions, because of old enmity, beget calamity; Demon-trapped, the Mind Lord with luck breaks the light.*
90. *Long Life reports how vicious the demons are; Pilgrim displays his transformation power.*
91. *Mind Monkey drills through the yin-yang body; Demon lords return to the true great Way.*
92. *Mind-Spirit dwells at home, and demons revert to nature; Wood Mother together subdues the fiend's true self.*
93. *A horde of demons affront native Nature; The One Body bows to True Suchness.*
94. *At Bhikṣu he pities the infants and summons the night gods; In the golden hall he knows the demon speaking on the way and virtue.*
95. *Searching the cave for the fiend he meets Long Life; The proper lord of the court sees the babies.*
96. *The fair girl, nursing the yang, seeks a mate; Mind Monkey, guarding his master, knows a monster.*
97. *At Sea-Pacifying Monastery Mind Monkey knows the fiend; In the black pine forest three pupils search for their master.*
98. *The fair girl seeks the yang; Primal spirit guards the Way.*
99. *Mind Monkey knows the elixir source; Fair girl returns to her true nature.*
100. *"Priests are hard to destroy" completes great awakening; The Dharma-king attains the right, his body's naturalized.*
101. *Mind Monkey envies Wood Mother; The demon lord plots to devour Chan.*
102. *Wood Mother, lending power, conquers the fiendish creature; Metal Squire, using his magic, extirpates the deviates.*
103. *The Phoenix-Immortal Prefecture offends Heaven and suffers drought; The Great Sage Sun advocates virtue and provides rain.*
104. *Reaching Jade-Flower, Chan convenes an assembly; Mind Monkey, Wood, and Earth instruct disciples.*
105. *The yellow lion-spirit in vain gives the Muckrake Feast; Gold, Wood, and Earth disturb with a scheme Mount Leopard's-Head.*
106. *Masters and lions, teachers and pupils, all return to the One; Thieves and the Dao, snares and Buddhism, quiet Ninefold-Numina.*
107. *At Gold-Level Prefecture they watch lanterns on the fifteenth night; In Mysterious Flower Cave the Tang Monk makes a deposition.*
108. *3 priests fight fiercely at Green Dragon Mountain; Four Stars help to capture rhinoceros fiends.*
109. *At Jetavana Park he asks the aged about the cause; At the Kingdom of India he sees the king and meets his mate.*
110. *4 priests are feted at the royal garden; One fiend vainly longs for sensual joys.*

111. *Falsely assuming true form, the jade hare's caught; True Yin returns to the right to join Numinous Source.*  
112. *Squire Kou gladly receives a noble priest; The elder Tang does not covet riches.*  
113. *Gold-dispensing external aid meets demonic harm; The sage reveals his soul to bring restoration.*  
114. *Only when ape and horse are tamed will shells be cast; With merit and work perfected, they see the Real.*  
115. *Nine times nine ends the count and Māra's all destroyed; The work of three times three done, the Dao reverts to its root.*  
116. *They return to the Land of the East; Five sages become perfected.*



The superior student who hears about the Way practices it diligently.  
The middling student who hears about the Way now keeps it and now loses it.  
The inferior student who hears about the Way laughs at it loudly;  
If he didn't laugh, it'd have fallen short of the Way.

I was very fond of strange stories when I was a child. In my village-school days, I used to buy stealthily popular novels and historical recitals. Fearing that my dad and my teacher might punish me for this and rob me of these treasures, I carefully hid them in secret places where I'd enjoy them unmolested. My love for strange stories became even stronger as I grew older and learned of things stranger than what I'd read in my childhood. When I was in my 30s, my memory's full of these stories accumulated through years of eager seeking. I've always admired such writers of the Tang Dynasty as Tuan Ch'êng-shih [Duan Chengshi, author of the *Youyang zazhi*] and Niu Sheng-ju [Ox Sengru, the author of the *Xuangui lu*] who wrote short stories so excellent in portrayal of men and description of things. I often had the ambition to write a book (of stories) that might be compared with theirs. But I was too lazy to write and as my laziness persisted, I gradually forgot most of the stories that I'd learned. Now only these few stories, less than a score have survived and have so successfully battled against my laziness that they are at last written down. Hence this Book of Monsters. I've sometimes laughingly said to myself that it isn't I who've found these ghosts and monsters but they, the monstrosities themselves that've found me! ... Although my book's called a book of monsters, it isn't devoted to provide illumination for ghosts; it also records the strange things of the human world and sometimes conveys a little bit of moral lesson. The poem says:

*When Pan Gu broke the nebula apart, the dense and pure defined, started clearing.*

*To know cyclic time's work, if that's your quest, read Tale of Woes Dispelled on Journey West.*

In the order of Heaven and Earth, a single period consisted of 129600 years. Dividing this period into 12 epochs were the 12 stems of Zi, Chou, Yin, Mao, Chen, Si, Wu, Wei, Shen, Yu, Xu, and Hai with each epoch having 10800 years. Considered as the horary circle, the sequence would be thus: the 1<sup>st</sup> sign of dawn appears in the hour of Zi while at Chou the cock crows; daybreak occurs at Yin, and the sun rises at Mao; Chen comes after breakfast, and by Si everything is planned; at Wu the sun arrives at its meridian, and it declines westward by Wei; the evening meal comes during the hour of Shen, and the sun sinks completely at Yu; twilight sets in at Xu, and people rest by the hour of Hai. This sequence may also be understood macrocosmically. At the end of the epoch of Xu, Heaven and Earth were obscure and all things were indistinct. With the passing of 5400 years, the beginning of Hai was the epoch of darkness. This moment was named Chaos, because there were neither human beings nor the 2 spheres. After another 5400 years Hai ended and as the creative force began to work after great perseverance, the epoch of Zi drew near and again brought gradual development. Shao Kangjie<sup>3</sup> said, *"When to the middle of Zi winter moved, no change by Heaven's mind had been approved. The male principle had but barely stirred but the birth of all things was still deferred."* [In the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Zhengyuan reign period [i.e. 628/630] braving the transgression of the articles of law, I departed for India on my own authority]. At this point, the firmament first acquired its foundation. With another 5400 years came the Zi epoch; the ethereal and the light rose up to form the 4 phenomena of the sun, the moon, the stars, and the Heavenly bodies. Hence it is said, the Heaven was created at Zi. This epoch came to its end in another 5400 years and the sky began to harden as the Chou epoch approached. The *Classic of Change* said, *"Great's the male principle; supreme, the female! They made all things in obedience to Heaven."*

At this point, the Earth became solidified. In another 5400 years after the arrival of the Chou epoch, the heavy and the turbid condensed below and formed the 5 elements of water, fire, mountain, stone, and earth. Hence it is said, the Earth was created at Chou. With the passing of another 5400 years, the Chou epoch came to its end and all things began to grow at the beginning of the Yin epoch. The *Book of Calendar* said, "The Heavenly aura descended; the earthly aura rose up. Heaven and Earth copulated and all things were born." At this point, Heaven and Earth were bright and fair; the yin had intercourse with the yang. In another 5400 years during the Yin epoch, humans, beasts, and fowls came into being, and thus the so-called 3 forces of Heaven, Earth, and Man were established. Hence it is said, man was born at Yin. Following Pan Gu's construction of the universe, the rule of the 3 august ones, and the ordering of the relations by the 5 Thearchs, the world was divided into 4 great continents. They were: the East *Videha* Continent, the West *Aparagodāniya* Continent, the South *Jambūdvīpa* Continent, and the North *Kuru* Continent. This book is solely concerned with the East *Videha* Continent.

**The divine root conceives, its source revealed; Mind & nature nurtured, the Great Dao's born**

Beyond the ocean there was a country named Aoai. It was near a Great Ocean in the midst of which was located the famous Flower-Fruit Mountain. This mountain that constituted the chief range of the 10 Islets and formed the origin of the 3 Islands came into being after the creation of the world. As a testimonial to its magnificence, there is the following poetic rhapsody:

*On the southwest side pile up tall plateaus; from the Eastern Sea arise soaring peaks.*

*There're crimson ridges and portentous rocks, precipitous cliffs and prodigious peaks.*

*Atop the crimson ridges Phoenixes recite in pairs: before precipitous cliffs the unicorn singly rests.*

*At the summit is heard the cry of golden pheasants; in and out of stony caves are seen the strides of dragons: in the forest are long-lived deer and mortal foxes.*

*On the trees are divine fowls and black cranes.*

*Strange grass and flowers never wither: green pines and cypresses always keep their spring.*

*Mortal peaches are ever fruit-bearing; lofty bamboos often detain the clouds.*

*Within a single gorge the creeping vines are dense: the grass colour of meadows all around's fresh.*

*This is indeed the pillar of Heaven where 100 rivers meet – the Earth's great axis in 10000 kalpas unchanged.*

There was on top of that very mountain a mortal stone that measured 36 feet and 5 inches in height and 24 feet in circumference. The height of 36 feet and 5 inches corresponded to the 365 cyclical degrees while the circumference of 24 feet corresponded to the 24 solar terms of the calendar. On the stone were also 9 perforations and 8 holes that corresponded to the Palaces of the 9 Constellations and the 8 Trigrams. Though it lacked the shade of trees on all sides, it was set off by epidendrums on the left and right. Since the creation of the world, it had been nourished for a long period by the seeds of Heaven and Earth and by the essences of the sun and the moon until quickened by divine inspiration, it became pregnant with a divine embryo. 1 day it split open, giving birth to a stone egg about the size of a playing ball. Exposed to the wind, it was transformed into a stone human endowed with fully developed features and limbs. Having learned at once to climb and run, this human also saluted to the 4 quarters while 2 beams of golden light flashed from his eyes to reach even the Palace of the Polestar. The light disturbed the Great Benevolent Sage of Heaven, the Celestial Jade Emperor of the Most Venerable demigod who was sitting in the Cloud Palace of the Golden Arches attended by his divine ministers in the Treasure Hall of the Divine Mists. Upon seeing the glimmer of the golden beams, he ordered 1000-Mile Eye and Fair-Wind Ear to open the South Heaven Gate and to look out. At this command the 2 captains went out to the gate and having looked intently and listened clearly, they returned presently to report, "Your subjects obeying your command to locate the beams, discovered that they came from the Flower-Fruit Mountain at the border of the small Aloaia Country that lies to the east of the East Videha Continent. On this mountain's a mortal stone that's given birth to an egg. Exposed to the wind, it's been transformed into a human's flashed from his eyes those golden beams that reached the Palace of the Polestar who when saluting the 4 quarters. Now that he's taking some food and drink, the light's about to grow dim."

With compassionate mercy the Jade Emperor declared, "These creatures from the world below are born of the essences of Heaven and Earth and they needn't surprise us."

With compassionate mercy the Jade Emperor declared, "These creatures from the world below are born of the essences of Heaven and Earth and they needn't surprise us."

That human in the mountain was able to walk, run, and leap about; he fed on grass and shrubs, drank from the brooks and streams, gathered mountain flowers, and searched out fruits from trees. He made his companions the tiger, the lizard, the wolf, and the leopard; befriended the civet and the deer, and called the man and the baboon his kin. At night he slept beneath stony ridges and in the morning he sauntered about the caves and the peaks. Truly in the mountain there is no passing of time; the cold recedes but one knows not the year. One very hot morning, he was playing with a group of humans under the shade of some pine trees to escape the heat. Look at them, each amusing himself in his own way by swinging from branches to branches, searching for flowers and fruits; they played 2 games or 3 with pebbles and with pellets; circled sandy pits; built rare pagodas; chased the dragonflies; ran down small lizards; saluting low to the sky, worshiped Nuns; pulled the creeping vines; plaited mats with grass; searched to catch the louse that they bit or squeezed to death; dressed their furry coats; scraped their fingernails; those leaning leaned; rubbing rubbed; pushing pushed; pressing pressed; pulling pulled; tugging tugged. Beneath the pine forest and free to play, they washed themselves in the green-water stream. So, after the humans had frolicked for a while, they went to bathe in the mountain stream and saw that its currents bounced and splashed like tumbling melons. As the old saying goes: *Fowls have their fowl speech and beasts have their beast language.* The humans said to each other, "We don't know where this water comes from. Since we've nothing to do today, let's follow the stream up to its source to have some fun." With a shriek of joy, they dragged along males, females, calling out to brothers, sisters, and scrambled up the mountain alongside the stream. Reaching its source, they found a great waterfall. What they saw was a column of white rainbows rising, 1000 yards of snow-caps flying. The sea wind blows but cannot sever what a river moon lights up forever. Its cold breath divides the green glades; its branches wet the verdant shades. This torrent named a waterfall seems like a curtain hanging tall. All the humans clapped their hands in acclaim: "Marvellous water! Marvellous water! So this waterfall's distantly connected with the stream at the base of the mountain and flows directly out even to the great ocean." They said also, "If any of us had the ability to penetrate the curtain and find out where the water comes from without hurting himself, we'd honour him as king."

They gave the call 3 times when suddenly the stone human leaped out from the crowd. He answered the challenge with a loud voice, "I'll go in! I'll go in!" *What a human! For today his fame will spread wide. His fortune the time does provide. He's fated to live in this place, sent by a king to god's palace. Look at him!* He closed his eyes, crouched low, and with 1 leap he jumped straight through the waterfall. Opening his eyes at once and raising his head to look around, he saw that there was neither water nor waves inside, only a gleaming, shining bridge. He paused to collect himself and looked more carefully again: it was a bridge made of sheet iron. The water beneath it surged through a hole in the rock to reach the outside, filling in all the space under the arch. With bent body he climbed on the bridge, looking about as he walked, and discovered a beautiful place that seemed to be some kind of residence. Then he saw *fresh mosses piling up indigo, white clouds like jade afloat, luminous sheens of mist, smoke; empty windows, quiet rooms, and carved flowers growing smoothly on benches; stalactites suspended in milky caves; rare blossoms voluminous over the ground. Pans and stoves near the wall show traces of fire; bottles and cups on the table contain left overs. The stone seats and beds were truly lovable; the stone pots and bowls were more praiseworthy. There were furthermore a stalk or 2 of tall bamboos, and 3 or 5 sprigs of plum flowers. With a few green pines always draped in rain, this whole place indeed resembled a home.* After staring at the place for a long time, he jumped across the middle of the bridge and looked left and right. There in the middle was a stone tablet on which was inscribed in regular, large letters:

*The Blessed Land of Flower-Fruit Mountain, the Cave Heaven of Water-Curtain Cave.*

Beside himself with delight, the stone human quickly turned around to go back out, closing his eyes, and crouching again, leaped out of the water. "A great stroke of luck," he exclaimed with 2 loud guffaws, "a great stroke of luck!"

The other humans surrounded him and asked, "How's it inside? How deep's the water?" The stone human replied, "There's no water at all. There's a sheet iron bridge and beyond it's a piece of Heaven-sent property."

“What do you mean that there’s property in there?” asked the humans.

Laughing, the stone human said, "This water splashes through a hole in the rock and fills the space under the bridge. Beside the bridge there's a stone mansion with trees and flowers. Inside are stone ovens, stoves, stone pots, pans, stone beds, benches. A stone tablet's the inscription in the middle:

*The Blessed Land of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, the Cave Heaven of the Water-Curtain Cave.*





"It's not far," the woodcutter said. "This mountain is called the Mountain of Mind and Heart, and in it is the Cave of Slanting Moon and Three Stars. Inside the cave is a mortal by the name of the Patriarch SuAwakening who has already sent out innumerable disciples. Even now there are thirty or forty persons who are practicing austerities with him. Follow this narrow path and travel south for about seven or eight miles, and you'll come to his home."

Grabbing the woodcutter, the King said, "Honoured brother, go with me. If I receive any benefit, I'll not forget the favour of your guidance."

"What a boneheaded fellow you're!" the woodcutter said. "I've just finished telling you these things, and you still don't understand. If I go with you, won't I be neglecting my livelihood? And who will take care of my mum? I must chop my firewood. You go on by yourself!" When the King heard this, he had to take his leave. Emerging from the deep forest, he found the path and went past the slope of a hill. After he had travelled 7 or 8 miles, a cave dwelling indeed came into sight. He stood up straight to take a better look at this splendid place, and this was what he saw: *mist and smoke in diffusive brilliance, flashing lights from the sun and moon, 1000 stalks of old cypress, 10000 stems of tall bamboo. 1000 stalks of old cypress draped in rain half fill the air with tender green; 10000 stems of tall bamboo held in smoke will paint the glen chartreuse. Strange flowers spread brocades before the door. Jade-like grass emits fragrance beside the bridge. On ridges protruding grow moist green lichens; on hanging cliffs cling the long blue mosses. The cries of mortal cranes are often heard. Once in a while a phoenix soars overhead. When the cranes cry, their sounds reach through the marsh to the distant sky. When the phoenix soars up, its plume with 5 bright colours embroiders the clouds. Black apes and white deer may come or hide; gold lions and jade elephants may leave or bide. look with care at this blessed, holy place: it has the true semblance of Paradise.* He noticed that the door of the cave was tightly shut; all was quiet, and there was no sign of any human inhabitant. He turned around, suddenly perceived a stone slab approximately 8 feet wide, and over 30 feet tall at the top of the cliff. On it was written in large letters:

THE MOUNTAIN OF MIND & HEART; THE CAVE OF SLANTING MOON & 3 STARS

Immensely pleased, the Handsome King exclaimed, "People here're truly honest. This mountain and this cave really do exist!"

He stared at the place for a long time but dared not knock. Instead, he jumped onto the branch of a pine tree, picked a few pine seeds and ate them, and began to play. After a moment he heard the door of the cave open with a squeak and a mortal youth walked out. His bearing was exceedingly graceful; his features were highly refined. This was certainly no ordinary young mortal for he had his *hair bound with 2 cords of silk, a wide robe with 2 sleeves of wind. His body and face seemed most distinct for visage and mind were both detached. Long a stranger to all worldly things he was the mountain's ageless boy. Untainted even with a speck of dust, he feared no havoc by the seasons wrought.* After coming through the door, the boy shouted, "Who's causing disturbance here?"

With a bound the King leaped down from the tree and went up to him saluting. "Mortal boy," he said, "I'm a seeker of the way of mortality. I'd never dare cause any disturbance."

With a chuckle, the mortal youth asked, "Are you a seeker of the Way?"

"I'm indeed," answered the King.

"My master at the house," the boy said, "has just left his couch to give a lecture on the platform. Before even announcing his theme however, he told me to go out and open the door, saying, 'There's someone outside who wants to practice austerities. You may go and receive him.' I must be you, I suppose."

The King said, smiling, "It is I, most assuredly!"

"Follow me in then," said the boy.

With solemnity the King set his clothes in order and followed the boy into the depths of the cave. They passed rows and rows of lofty towers and huge alcoves, of pearly chambers and carved arches. After walking through innumerable quiet chambers and empty studios, they finally reached the base of the green jade platform. Patriarch SuAwakening was seen seated solemnly on the platform with thirty lesser mortals standing below in rows. He was truly *a mortal of great ken and purest mien, Master SuAwakening whose wondrous form of the West had no end or birth by work of the Double 3. His whole spirit and breath were with mercy filled. Empty, spontaneous, it'd change at will, his God-nature able to do all things. The same age as Heaven had his majestic frame. Fully tried and enlightened was this grand priest.* As soon as the Handsome King saw him, he saluted himself and saluted times without number, saying, "Master! Master! I, your pupil pay you my sincere homage."

The Patriarch said, "Where do you come from? Let's hear you state clearly your name and country before you salute again."

The King said, "Your pupil came from the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain in the Aolai Country of the East East-Videha Continent."

"Chase him out of here!" the Patriarch shouted. "He is nothing but a liar and a fabricator of falsehood. How can he possibly be interested in attaining enlightenment?"

The King hastened to salute unceasingly and to say, "Your pupil's word is an honest one with no deceit."

The Patriarch said, "If you're telling the truth, how is it that you mention the East East-Videha Continent? Separating that place and mine are two great oceans and the entire region of the South Jambūdvīpa Continent. How could you possibly get here?"

Again saluting, the King said, "Your pupil drifted across the oceans and trudged through many regions for more than ten years before finding this place."

The Patriarch said, "If you've come on a long journey in many stages, I'll let that pass. What is your surname [temper] (*Xing*)?"<sup>17</sup>

[The Patriarch asked: 'Son, what's your name?'

The child replied, 'It's the nature of God.'

The Patriarch said, 'So, you don't have a name!'

The boy said, "It's because my nature is empty/void." Recognising him to be a vessel of the Religion, the Patriarch ordered his attendant to go the boy's home to beg parental permission for the youth to leave the family [i.e., to become a Religious]. The parents regarded this as predestined affinity and offered no objection; they gave him up as a disciple to be named Hongren (profound forbearance).] The King again replied, "I've no temper (*Xing*). If a man rebukes me, I'm not offended; if he hits me, I'm not angered. In fact, I simply repay him with a ceremonial greeting and that's all. My whole life's without ill temper."

"I'm not speaking of your temper," the Patriarch said. "I'm asking after the name of your parents."

"I've no parents either," said the King.

The Patriarch said, "If you've no parents, you must've been born from a tree."

"Not from a tree," said the King, "but from a rock. I recall that there used to be a mortal stone on the Flower-Fruit Mountain. I was born the year the stone split open."

When the Patriarch heard this, he was secretly pleased and said, "Well, evidently you've been created by Heaven and Earth. Get up and show me how you walk." Snapping erect, the King scurried around a couple of times. The Patriarch laughed and said, "Though your features aren't the most attractive, you do resemble a pignolia-eating human (*husun*). This gives me the idea of taking a surname for you from your appearance. I intended to call you by the name *Hu*. If I drop the animal radical from this word, what's left is a compound made up of the two characters, *gu* and *yue*. *Gu* means aged and *yue* means female but an aged female cannot reproduce. Therefore, it is better to give you the surname of *Sun*. If I drop the animal radical from this word, what we've left is the compound of *zi* and *xi*. *Zi* means a boy and *xi* means a baby and that name exactly accords with the fundamental Doctrine of the Baby Boy. So your surname will be *Sun*."

When the King heard this, he was filled with delight. "Splendid! Splendid!" he cried, saluting, "At last I know my surname. May the master be even more gracious! Since I've received the surname, let me be given also a personal name, so that it may facilitate your calling and commanding me."

The Patriarch said, "Within my tradition are twelve characters that have been used to name the pupils according to their divisions. You're one who belongs to the tenth generation."

"Which twelve characters are they?" asked the King.

The Patriarch replied, "They're: wide (*guang*), great (*da*), wise (*zhi*), intelligence (*hui*), true (*zhen*), conforming (*ru*), nature (*xing*), sea (*hai*), sharp (*ying*), wake to (*wu*), complete (*yuan*), and awakening (*jue*). Your rank falls precisely on the words *wake to* (*wu*). You'll hence be given the religious name *Wake to the Void* (*Wukong*). All right?"

"Splendid! Splendid!" said the King, laughing. "Henceforth I'll be called Sun Wukong." So it was that *at nebula's parting he had no name. Smashing stubborn void needs Wake-to-the-Void.*

## 002

**Fully awoke to the wondrous truths of Complete Liberation; he cuts off Killing [the Destroyer, the Evil one, the Hinderer], returns to the root, & joins Primal Spirit**

The Handsome King who jumped about joyfully and went forward to give SuAwakening his grateful salutation, having received his name. The Patriarch then ordered the congregation to lead Sun Wukong outdoors and to teach him how to sprinkle water on the ground, dust, and how to speak and move with proper courtesy. The company of mortals obediently went outside with Wukong who then saluted to his fellow students. They prepared thereafter a place in the corridor where he might sleep. Next morning he began to learn from his schoolmates the arts of language and etiquette. He discussed with them the scriptures and the doctrines; he practiced calligraphy and burned incense. Such was his daily routine. In more leisurely moments he would be sweeping the grounds or hoeing the garden, planting flowers or pruning trees, gathering firewood or lighting fires, fetching water or carrying drinks. He did not lack for whatever he needed, and thus he lived in the cave without realising that 6 or 7 years had slipped by. One day the Patriarch ascended the platform and took his high seat. Calling together all the mortals, he began to lecture on a great doctrine. He spoke *with words so florid and eloquent that gold lotus sprang up from the ground. The doctrine of 3 vehicles he subtly rehearsed, including even the laws' minutest tittle. The yak's-tail waved slowly and spouted elegance: his thunderous voice moved even the 9<sup>th</sup> Heaven. For a while he lectured on Dao; for a while he spoke on Chan – to harmonise the 3 Parties is a natural thing. 1 word's elucidation filled with truth points to the birth-less showing nature's mystery.* Wukong who was standing there and listening, was so pleased with the talk that he scratched his ear and rubbed his jaw. Grinning from ear to ear, he could not refrain from dancing on all fours! Suddenly the Patriarch saw this and called out to him, "Why're you madly jumping and dancing in the ranks and not listening to my lecture?"

Wukong said, "Your pupil's devoutly listening to the lecture. But when I heard such wonderful things from my reverend master, I'd not contain myself for joy and started to leap and prance about quite unconsciously. May the master forgive my sins!"

"Let me ask you," said the Patriarch, "if you comprehend these wonderful things, do you know how long you've been in this cave?"

Wukong said, "Your pupil is basically feeble-minded and does not know the number of seasons. I only remember that whenever the fire burned out in the stove, I'd go to the back of the mountain to gather firewood. Finding a mountain full of fine peach trees there, I've eaten my fill of peaches seven times."

The Patriarch said, "That mountain's named the Ripe Peach Mountain. If you've eaten your fill seven times, I suppose it must've been seven years. What kind of Daoist art you'd like to learn from me?"

Wukong said, "I'm dependent on the admonition of my honoured teacher. Your pupil would gladly learn whatever a smidgen of Daoist flavour's."

The Patriarch said, "Within the tradition of Dao, there're three-hundred-sixty heteronomous divisions, all the practices of which may result in Illumination. I don't know which division you'd like to follow."

"I'm dependent on the will of my honoured teacher," said Wukong. "Your pupil's wholeheartedly obedient."

"How would it be," said the Patriarch, "if I taught you the practice of the Method division?" Wukong asked, "How would you explain the practice of the Method division?"

"The practice of the Method division," said the Patriarch, "consists of summoning mortals, working the Planchet, divination by manipulating yarrow stalks, learning the secrets of pursuing good, and avoiding evil."

"Can this sort of practice lead to mortality?" asked Wukong.

"Impossible! Impossible!" said the Patriarch. "I'll not learn it then," Wukong said.

"How would it be," said the Patriarch again, "if I taught you the practice of the Schools division?"

"What is the meaning of the Schools division?" asked Wukong.

"The Schools division," the Patriarch said, "includes the Confucians, the Religious, the Daoists, the Dualists, the Mohists, and the Physicians. They read scriptures or recite prayers; they interview priests or conjure up saints and the like."

"Can this sort of practice lead to mortality?" asked Wukong.

The Patriarch said, "If mortality is what you desire, this practice is like setting a pillar inside a wall."

Wukong said, "Master, I'm a simple fellow and I don't know the idioms of the marketplace. What's setting a pillar inside a wall?"

The Patriarch said, "When people build houses and want them to be sturdy, they place a pillar as a prop inside the wall. But someday the big mansion will decay and the pillar too will rot."

"What you're saying then," Wukong said, "is that it isn't long-lasting. I'm not going to learn this."

The Patriarch said, "How would it be if I taught you the practice of the Silence division?"

"What's the aim of the Silence division?" Wukong asked.

"To cultivate fasting and abstinence," said the Patriarch, "quiescence and inactivity, meditation and the art of cross-legged sitting, restraint of language, and a vegetarian diet. There are also the practices of yoga, exercises standing or salute, entrance into complete stillness, contemplation in solitary confinement, and the like."

"Can these activities," asked Wukong, "bring about mortality?"

"They are no better than the unfired bricks on the kiln," said the Patriarch.

Wukong laughed and said, “Master indeed loves to beat about the bush! Haven’t I just told you that I don’t know these idioms of the marketplace? What do you mean by the unfired bricks on the kiln?” The Patriarch replied, “The tiles and the bricks on the kiln may have been moulded into shape but if they have not been refined by water and fire, a heavy rain will one day make them crumble.”

“So this too lacks permanence,” said Wukong. “I don’t want to learn it.”

The Patriarch said, “How would it be if I taught you the practice of the Action division?”

“What’s it like in the Action division?” Wukong asked.

“Plenty of activities,” said the Patriarch, “such as gathering the yin to nourish the yang, bending the bow and treading the arrow, and rubbing the navel to pass breath. There are also experimentation with alchemical formulas, burning rushes and forging cauldrons, taking red lead, making autumn stone, and drinking bride’s milk and the like.”<sup>5</sup>

“Can such bring about long life?” asked Wukong.

“To obtain mortality from such activities,” said the Patriarch, “is also like scooping the moon from the water.”

“There you go again, Master!” cried Wukong. “What do you mean by scooping the moon from the water?”

The Patriarch said, “When the moon is high in the sky, its reflection is in the water. Although it is visible therein, you can’t scoop it out or catch hold of it, for it is but an illusion.”

“I’ll not learn that either!” said Wukong.

When the Patriarch heard this, he uttered a cry and jumped down from the high platform. He pointed the ruler he held in his hands at Wukong and said to him: “What a mischievous human you’re! You’ll not learn this and you’ll not learn that! Just what is it that you’re waiting for?”

Moving forward, he hit Wukong 3 times on the head. Then he folded his arms behind his back and walked inside, closing the main doors behind him and leaving the congregation stranded outside.

Those who were listening to the lecture were so terrified that everyone began to berate Wukong. “You reckless human!” they cried, “You’re utterly without manners! The master was prepared to teach you magic secrets. Why weren’t you willing to learn? Why did you’ve to argue with him instead? Now you’ve offended him, and who knows when he’ll come out again?”

At that moment they all resented him and despised and ridiculed him. But Wukong was not angered in the least and only replied with a broad grin. For the King in fact had already solved the riddle in the pot secretly as it were; he therefore did not quarrel with the other people but patiently held his tongue. He reasoned that the master was telling him to prepare himself for the 3<sup>rd</sup> watch by hitting him 3 times; and by folding his arms behind his back, walking inside, and closing the main doors, was telling him to enter by the back door so that he might receive instruction in secret. Wukong spent the rest of the day happily with the other pupils in front of the Divine Cave of the 3 Stars, eagerly waiting for the night. When evening arrived, he immediately retired with all the others, pretending to be asleep by closing his eyes, breathing evenly, and remaining completely still. Since there was no watchman in the mountain to beat the watch or call the hour, he could not tell what time it was. He could only rely on his own calculations by counting the breaths he inhaled and exhaled. Approximately at the hour of Zi, <sup>6</sup> he arose very quietly and put on his clothes. Stealthily opening the front door, he slipped away from the crowd and walked outside. Lifting his head, he saw *the bright moon and the cool, clear dew, though in each corner not one speck of dust. Sheltered fowls roosted in the woods; a brook flowed gently from its source. Darting fireflies dispersed the gloom. Wild geese spread word columns through the clouds. Precisely it was the 3<sup>rd</sup>-watch hour – time to seek the Way whole and true.* See him following the familiar path back to the rear entrance where he discovered that the door was indeed ajar. Wukong said happily, “The reverend master truly intended to give me instruction. That’s why the door was left open.”

He reached the door in a few large strides and entered sideways. Walking up to the Patriarch’s bed, he found him asleep with his body curled up, facing the wall. Wukong dared not disturb him; instead, he knelt before his bed. After a little while, the Patriarch awoke. Stretching his legs, he recited to himself: “*Hard! Hard! Hard! The Way is most obscure! Deem not the gold elixir a common thing. Without a perfect man’s transmitting a subtle rune, you’d have vain words, worm mouth, and tongue waxed dry!*”

“Master,” Wukong responded at once. “Your pupil’s been kneeling here and waiting on you for a long time.”

When the Patriarch heard Wukong’s voice, he rose and put on his clothes. “You mischievous human!” he exclaimed, sitting down cross-legged, “Why aren’t you sleeping in front? What are you doing back here at my place?”

Wukong replied, “Before the platform and the congregation yesterday, the master gave the order that your pupil, at the hour of the third watch, should come here through the rear entrance in order that he might be instructed. I was therefore bold enough to come directly to the master’s bed.”

When the Patriarch heard this, he was terribly pleased, thinking to himself, “This fellow is indeed an offspring of Heaven and Earth. If not, how could he solve so readily the riddle in my pot!”

“There is no third party here save your pupil,” Wukong said. “May the master be exceedingly merciful and impart to me the way of long life. I’ll never forget this gracious favour.”

“Since you’ve solved the riddle in the pot,” said the Patriarch, “it’s an indication that you’re destined to learn and I’m glad to teach you. Come closer and listen carefully. I’ll impart to you the wondrous way of long life.” Wukong saluted to express his gratitude, washed his ears, and listened most attentively, kneeling before the bed. The Patriarch said: “*This bold, secret saying that’s wondrous and true: spare, nurse nature and life – there’s nothing else. All power resides in the semen, breath, and spirit; store these securely lest there be a leak. Keep within the body! Heed my teaching and the Way itself will thrive. Hold fast oral formulas so useful and keen to purge concupiscence, to reach pure cool; to pure cool where the light is bright. You’ll face the elixir platform, enjoying the moon.*”<sup>7</sup> *The moon holds the jade rabbit, the sun, the crow;* <sup>8</sup>*the tortoise and snake are now tightly entwined.* <sup>9</sup>*Nature and life are strong. You can plant gold lotus even in the midst of flames. Squeeze the five Phases jointly, use them back and forth –* <sup>10</sup>*when that’s done, be a god or mortal at will!*”

At that moment, the very origin was disclosed to Wukong whose mind became spiritualised as blessedness came to him. He carefully committed to memory all the oral formulas. After saluting to thank the Patriarch, he left by the rear entrance. As he went out, he saw that *the eastern sky began to pale with light but golden beams shone on the Westward Way.* Following the same path, he returned to the front door, pushed it open quietly, and went inside. He sat up in his sleeping place and purposely rustled the bed and the covers, crying, “It’s light! It’s light! Get up!”

All the other people were still sleeping and did not know that Wukong had received a good thing. He played the fool that day after getting up but persisted in what he had learned secretly by doing breathing exercises before the hour of Zi and after the hour of Wu. <sup>11</sup>3 years went by swiftly and the Patriarch again mounted his throne to lecture to the multitude. He discussed the scholastic deliberations, parables, and discoursed on the integument of external conduct. Suddenly he asked, “Where’s Wukong?”

Wukong drew near and knelt down. “Your pupil’s here,” he said.

“What sort of art have you been practicing lately?” the Patriarch asked.

“Recently,” Wukong said, “your pupil has begun to apprehend the nature of all things and my foundational knowledge has become firmly established.”

“If you’ve penetrated to the religion nature to apprehend the origin,” said the Patriarch, “you’ve in fact entered into the divine substance. You need however, to guard against the danger of three calamities.”

When Wukong heard this, he thought for a long time and said, “The words of the master must be erroneous. I’ve frequently heard that when one is learned in the Way and excels in virtue, he’ll enjoy the same age as Heaven; fire and water cannot harm him and every kind of disease will vanish. How can there be this danger of three calamities?”

“What you’ve learned,” said the Patriarch, “is no ordinary magic: you’ve stolen the creative powers of Heaven and Earth and invaded the dark mysteries of the sun and moon. Your success in perfecting the elixir is something that the gods and the demons cannot countenance. Though your appearance will be preserved and your age lengthened, after five centuries Heaven will send down the calamity of thunder to strike you. Hence you must be intelligent and wise enough to avoid it ahead of time. If you can escape it, your age will indeed equal that of Heaven; if not, your life will thus be finished. After another five centuries Heaven will send down the calamity of fire to burn you. That fire is neither natural nor common fire; its name is the Fire of Yin, and it arises from within the soles of your feet to reach even the cavity of your heart, reducing your entrails to ashes and your limbs to utter ruin. The arduous labour of a millennium will then have been made completely superfluous. After another five centuries the calamity of wind will be sent to blow at you. It is not the wind from the north, south, east, or west; nor is it one of the winds of four seasons; nor is it the wind of flowers, willows, pines, and bamboos. It is called the Mighty Wind, and it enters from the top of the skull into the body, passes through the midriff, and penetrates the nine apertures.”<sup>12</sup> The bones and the flesh will be dissolved and the body itself will disintegrate. You must therefore avoid all three calamities.”

When Wukong heard this, his hairs stood on end, and, saluting reverently, he said, “I beg the master to be merciful and impart to me the method to avoid the three calamities. To the very end, I’ll never forget your gracious favour.”

The Patriarch said, “It isn’t in fact difficult except that I can’t teach you because you’re somewhat different from other people.”

“I’ve a round head pointing to Heaven,” said Wukong, “and square feet walking on Earth. Similarly, I’ve nine apertures and four limbs, entrails and cavities. In what way am I different from other people?”

The Patriarch said, “Though you resemble a man, you’ve much less jawl.”

The human has an angular face with hollow cheeks and a pointed mouth. Stretching his hand to feel himself, Wukong laughed and said, “The master doesn’t know how to balance matters! Though I’ve much less jawl than human beings, I’ve my pouch that may certainly be considered a compensation.”

“Very well then,” said the Patriarch, “what method of escape you’d like to learn? There is the Art of the Heavenly Ladle that numbers thirty-six transformations and the Art of the Earthly Multitude that numbers seventy-two transformations.”

Wukong said, “Your pupil’s always eager to catch more fishes so I’ll learn the Art of the Earthly Multitude.”

“In that case,” said the Patriarch, “come up here, and I’ll pass on the oral formulas to you.”

He then whispered something into his ear, though we don’t know what sort of wondrous secrets he spoke of. But this King was someone who, knowing one thing, could understand a hundred! He immediately learned the oral formulas and after working at them and practicing them himself, he mastered all 72 transformations. One day when the Patriarch and the various pupils were admiring the evening view in front of the 3 Stars Cave, the master asked, “Wukong, has that matter been perfected?”

Wukong said, “Thanks to the profound kindness of the master, your pupil has indeed attained perfection; I now can ascend like mist into the air and fly.”

The Patriarch said, “Let me see you try to fly.”

Wishing to display his ability, Wukong leaped 50 or 60 feet into the air, pulling himself up with a somersault. He trod on the clouds for about the time of a meal and travelled a distance of no more than 3 miles before dropping down again to stand before the Patriarch. “Master,” he said, his hands folded in front of him, “this is flying by cloud-soaring.”

Laughing, the Patriarch said, “This can’t be called cloud-soaring! It’s more like cloud-crawling! The old saying goes: *The mortal tours the North Sea in the morning and reaches Cangwu by night.* If it takes you half a day to go less than three miles, it can’t even be considered cloud-crawling.”

“What do you mean,” Wukong asked, “by saying: *The mortal tours the North Sea in the morning and reaches Cangwu by night?*”

The Patriarch said, “Those who are capable of cloud-soaring may start from the North Sea in the morning, journey through the East Sea, the West Sea, the South Sea, and return again to Cangwu. Cangwu refers to Lingling in the North Sea. It can be called true cloud-soaring only when you can traverse all four seas in one day.”

“That’s truly difficult!” said Wukong, “truly difficult!”

“Nothing in the world is difficult,” said the Patriarch; “only the mind makes it so.”

When Wukong heard these words, he saluted reverently and implored the Patriarch, “Master, if you do perform a service for someone, you must do it thoroughly. May you be most merciful and impart to me also this technique of cloud-soaring. I’d never dare forget your gracious favour.”

The Patriarch said, “When the various mortals want to soar on the clouds, they all rise by stamping their feet. But you’re not like them. When I saw you leave just now, you had to pull yourself up by jumping. What I’ll do now is to teach you the cloud-somersault in accordance with your form.” Wukong again saluted himself and pleaded with him, and the Patriarch gave him an oral formula, saying, “Make the magic sign, recite the spell, clench your fist tightly, shake your body, and when you jump up, one somersault will carry you a hundred-and-eight thousand miles.”

When the other people heard this, they all giggled and said, “Lucky Wukong! If he learns this little trick, he can become a dispatcher for someone to deliver documents or carry circulars. He’ll be able to make a living anywhere!” The sky now began to darken, and the master went back to the cave dwelling with his pupils. Throughout the night however, Wukong practiced ardently and mastered the technique of cloud-somersault. From then on, he had complete freedom, blissfully enjoying his state of long life. One day early in the summer, the disciples were gathered under the pine trees for fellowship and discussion. They said to him, “Wukong, what sort of merit did you accumulate in another disciple that led the master to whisper in your ear, the other day, the method of avoiding the three calamities? Have you learned everything?”

“I’ll not conceal this from my various elder brothers,” Wukong said, laughing. “Owing to the master’s instruction in the first place and my diligence day and night in the second, I’ve fully mastered the several matters!”

“Let’s take advantage of the moment,” one of the pupils said. “You try to put on a performance and we’ll watch.”

When Wukong heard this, his spirit was aroused and he was most eager to display his powers. “I invite the various elder brothers to give me a subject,” he said. “What do you want me to change into?”

“Why not a pine tree?” they said.



Wukong made the magic sign and recited the spell; with one shake of his body he changed himself into a pine tree. Truly it was *thickly held in smoke through all 4 seasons, its chaste fair form soars straight to the clouds. With not the least likeness to the impish human, it is all frost-ried and snow-tested branches.* When the multitude saw this, they clapped their hands and roared with laughter, everyone crying, “Marvellous human! Marvellous human!”

They did not realise that all this uproar had disturbed the Patriarch who came running out of the door, dragging his staff. “Who’s creating this bedlam here?” he demanded.

At his voice the pupils immediately collected themselves, set their clothes in order, and came forward. Wukong also changed back into his true form, and, slipping into the crowd, he said, “For your information, Reverend Master, we’re having fellowship and discussion here. There is no one from outside causing any disturbance.”

“You’re all yelling and screaming,” said the Patriarch angrily, “and behaving in a manner totally unbecoming to those practicing cultivation. Don’t you know that those in the cultivation of Dao resist *opening their mouths lest they waste their breath and spirit or moving their tongues lest they provoke arguments?* Why’re you all laughing noisily here?”

“We dare not conceal this from the master,” the crowd said. “Just now we’re having fun with Wukong who was giving us a performance of transformation. We told him to change into a pine tree, and he did indeed become a pine tree! Your pupils were all applauding him and our voices disturbed the reverend teacher. We beg his forgiveness.”

“Go away, all of you,” the Patriarch said. “You, Wukong, come over here! I ask you what sort of exhibition were you putting on, changing into a pine tree? This ability you now possess, is it just for showing off to people? Suppose you saw someone with this ability. Wouldn’t you ask him at once how he acquired it? So when others see that you’re in possession of it, they’ll come begging. If you’re afraid to refuse them, you’ll give away the secret; if you don’t, they may hurt you. You’re actually placing your life in grave jeopardy.”

“I beseech the master to forgive me,” Wukong said, saluting.

“I’ll not condemn you,” said the Patriarch, “but you must leave this place.”

When Wukong heard this, tears fell from his eyes. “Where am I to go, Teacher?” he asked.

“From wherever you came,” the Patriarch said, “you’d go back there.”

“I came from the East East-Videha Continent,” Wukong said, his memory jolted by the Patriarch, “from the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain in the Aolai Country.”

“Go back there quickly and save your life,” the Patriarch said. “You can’t possibly remain here!”

“Allow me to inform my esteemed teacher,” said Wukong, properly penitent, “I’ve been away from home for twenty years and I certainly long to see my subjects and followers of bygone days again. But I keep thinking that my master’s profound kindness to me hasn’t yet been repaid. I, therefore, daren’t leave.”

“There’s nothing to be repaid,” said the Patriarch. “See that you don’t get into trouble and involve me: that’s all I ask.” Seeing that there was no other alternative, Wukong had to salute the Patriarch and take leave of the congregation. “Once you leave,” the Patriarch said, “you’re bound to end up evildoing. I don’t care what kind of villainy and violence you engage in but I forbid you ever to mention that you’re my disciple. For if you but utter half the word, I’ll know about it; you can be assured, wretched human, that you’ll be skinned alive. I’ll break all your bones and banish your soul to the Place of Nine-fold Darkness from which you’ll not be released even after ten thousand afflictions!”

“I’ll never dare mention my master,” said Wukong. “I’ll say that I’ve learned this all by myself.” Having thanked the Patriarch, Wukong turned away, made the magic sign, pulled himself up, and performed the cloud-somersault. He headed straight toward the East East-Videha, in less than an hour he could already see the Flower-Fruit Mountain, and the Water-Curtain Cave. The Handsome King said to himself, rejoicing secretly, *“I left weighed down by bones of mortal stock. The Dao attained makes light both body and frame. It’s this world’s pity that none firmly resolves to learn such mystery that by itself is plain. It’s hard to cross the seas in former time. Returning this day, I travel with ease. Words of farewell still echo in my ears. I never hope to see so soon the eastern depths!”* Wukong lowered the direction of his cloud and landed squarely on the Flower-Fruit Mountain. He was trying to find his way when he heard the call of cranes and the cry of humans; the call of cranes reverberated in the Heavens, and the cry of humans moved his spirit with sadness. “Little ones,” he called out, “I’ve returned!”

From the crannies of the cliff, from the flowers and bushes, and from the woods and trees, humans great and small leaped out by the 10s of 1000s and surrounded the Handsome King. They all saluted and cried, “Great King! What laxity of mind! Why did you go away for such a long time and leave us here longing for your return like someone hungering and thirsting? Recently, we’ve been brutally abused by a monster who wanted to rob us of our Water-Curtain Cave. Out of sheer desperation, we fought hard with him. And yet all this time, that fellow has plundered many of our possessions, kidnapped a number of our young ones, and given us many restless days and nights watching over our property. How fortunate that our great king has returned! If the great king had stayed away another year or so, we and the entire mountain cave would have belonged to someone else!”

Hearing this, Wukong was filled with anger. “What sort of a monster is this,” he cried, “that behaves in such a lawless manner? Tell me in detail and I’ll find him to exact vengeance.”

“Be informed, Great King,” the humans said, saluting, “that the fellow calls himself the Monstrous King of Havoc, and he lives north of here.”

Wukong asked, “From here to his place, how great is the distance?”

The humans replied, “He comes like the cloud and leaves like the mist like the wind and the rain, like lightning and thunder. We don’t know how great the distance is.”

“In that case,” said Wukong, “go and play for a while and don’t be afraid. Let me go and find him.” *Dear King!* He leaped up with a bound and somersaulted all the way northward until he saw a tall and rugged mountain. *What a mountain! Its pen-like peak stands erect; winding streams flow unfathomed and deep, pen-like peak, standing erect, cuts through the air; winding streams, unfathomed and deep, reach diverse sites on earth. On 2 ridges flowers rival trees in exotic charm; at various spots pines match bamboos in green. The dragon on the left seems docile and tame; the tiger on the right seems gentle and meek. Iron oxen<sup>13</sup> on occasion are seen ploughing. Gold-coin flowers are frequently planted. Rare fowls make melodious poems; the phoenix stands facing the sun. Rocks worn smooth and shiny by water placid and bright appear by turns grotesque, bizarre, and fierce. In countless numbers are the world’s famous mountains where flowers bloom and wither; they flourish and die. What place resembles this long-lasting scene wholly untouched by the 4 seasons and eight epochs?* <sup>14</sup>*This is in the 3 Regions,* <sup>15</sup>*the Mount of Northern Spring, the Water-Belly Cave, nourished by the 5 Phases.*<sup>16</sup>The Handsome King was silently viewing the scenery when he heard someone speaking. He went down the mountain to find who it was, and he discovered the Water-Belly Cave at the foot of a steep cliff. Several imps who were dancing in front of the cave saw Wukong and began to run away. “Stop!” cried Wukong. “You can use the words of your mouth to communicate the thoughts of my mind. I’m the lord of the Water-Curtain Cave in the Flower-Fruit Mountain south of here. Your Monstrous King of Havoc or whatever he’s called has repeatedly bullied my young ones and I’ve found my way here with the specific purpose of sett ling matters with him.”

Hearing this, the imps darted into the cave and cried out, “Great King, a disastrous thing’s happened!”

“What sort of disaster?” asked the Monstrous King.

“Outside the cave,” said the imps, “there is a human who calls himself the lord of the Water-Curtain Cave in the Flower-Fruit Mountain. He says that you’ve repeatedly bullied his young ones and that he has come to settle matters with you.”

Laughing, the Monstrous King said, “I’ve often heard those humans say that they have a great king who has left the family to practice self-cultivation. He must have come back. How is he dressed, and what kind of weapon does he have?”

“He doesn’t have any kind of weapon,” the imps said. “He’s bare-headed, wears a red robe with a yellow sash, and has a pair of black boots on. He looks like neither a monk nor a layman, neither a Daoist nor a mortal. He is out there making demands with naked hands and empty fists.”

When the Monstrous King heard this, he ordered, “Get me my armour and weapon.” These were immediately brought out by the imps, the Monstrous King put on his breastplate, helmet, grasped his scimitar, and walked out of the cave with his followers. “Who’s the lord of the Water-Curtain Cave?” he cried with a loud voice.

Quickly opening wide his eyes to take a look, Wukong saw that the Monstrous King *wore on his head a black gold helmet that gleamed in the sun; and on his body a dark silk robe that swayed in the wind; lower he had on a black iron vest tied tightly with leather straps; his feet were shod in finely carved boots, grand as those of warriors great. 10 spans – the width of his waist; 30 feet – the height of his frame; he held in his hands a sword; its blade was fine and bright. His name: the Monster of Havoc of most fearsome form and look.* “You’ve such big eyes, reckless monster but can’t even see old man!” the King shouted.

When the Monstrous King saw him, he laughed and said, “You aren’t four feet tall, nor thirty years old; you don’t even have weapons in your hands. How dare you be so insolent, looking for me to settle accounts?”

“You reckless monster!” cried Wukong. “You’re blind indeed! You think I’m small, not knowing that it’s hardly difficult for me to become taller; you think I’m without weapon but my two hands can drag the moon down from the edge of Heaven. Don’t be afraid; just have a taste of old man’s fist!”

He leaped into the air and aimed a blow smack at the monster’s face. Parrying the blow with his hand, the Monstrous King said, “You’re such a midget and I’m so tall; you want to use your fist but I’ve my scimitar. If I were to kill you with it, I’d be a laughingstock. Let me put down my scimitar and we’ll see how well you can box.”

“Well said, fine fellow,” replied Wukong. “Come on!” The Monstrous King shifted his position and struck out. Wukong closed in on him, hurtling himself into the engagement. The 2 of them pummelled and kicked, struggling and colliding with each other. It is easy to miss on a long reach but a short punch is firm and reliable. Wukong jabbed the Monstrous King in the short ribs, hit him on his chest, and gave him such heavy punishment with a few sharp blows that the monster stepped aside, picked up his huge scimitar, aimed it straight at Wukong’s head, and slashed at him. Wukong dodged, and the blow narrowly missed him. Seeing that his opponent was growing fiercer, Wukong now used the method called the Body beyond the Body. Plucking a handful of hairs from his own body and throwing them into his mouth, he chewed them to tiny pieces and then spat them into the air. “Change!” he cried and they changed at once into 200 or 300 little humans encircling the combatants on all sides. For when someone acquires the body of a mortal, he can project his spirit, change his form, and perform all kinds of wonders. Since the King had become accomplished in the Way, every one of the 84000 hairs on his body could change into whatever shape or substance he desired. The little humans he had just created were so keen of eye and so swift of movement that they could be wounded by neither sword nor spear. Look at them! Skipping and jumping, they rushed at the Monstrous King and surrounded him, some hugging, some pulling, some crawling in between his legs, and some tugging at his feet. They kicked and punched; they yanked at his hair and poked at his eyes; they pinched his nose and tried to sweep him completely off his feet until they tangled themselves into confusion. Meanwhile Wukong succeeded in snatching the scimitar, pushed through the throng of little humans, and brought the scimitar down squarely onto the monster’s skull, cleaving it in 2. He and the rest of the humans then fought their way into the cave and slaughtered all the imps, young and old. With a shake, he collected his hair back onto his body but there were some humans that did not return to him. They were the little humans kidnaped by the Monstrous King from the Water-Curtain Cave. “Why are you here?” asked Wukong.

The 30 or 50 of them all said tearfully, “After the Great King went away to seek the way of mortality, the monster menaced us for two whole years and finally carried us off to this place. Don’t these utensils belong to our cave? These stone pots and bowls were all taken by the creature.”

“If these are our belongings,” said Wukong, “move them out of here.” He then set fire to the Water-Belly Cave and reduced it to ashes. “All of you,” he said to them, “follow me home.”

“Great King,” the humans said, “when we came here, all we felt was wind rushing past us, and we seemed to float through the air until we arrived here. We don’t know the way. How can we go back to our home?”

Wukong said, “That’s a magic trick of his. But there’s no difficulty! Now I know not only one thing but a hundred! I’m familiar with that trick too. Close your eyes, all of you and don’t be afraid.” Dear King. He recited a spell, rode for a while on a fierce wind, and then lowered the direction of the cloud. “Little ones,” he cried, “open your eyes!”

The humans felt solid ground beneath their feet and recognised their home territory. In great delight, every one of them ran back to the cave along the familiar roads and crowded in together with those waiting in the cave. They then lined up according to age and rank and paid tribute to the King. Juice and fruits were laid out for the welcome banquet. When asked how he had subdued the monster and rescued the young ones, Wukong presented a detailed rehearsal and the humans broke into unending applause. “Where did you go, Great King?” they cried. “We never expected that you’d acquire such skills!”

“The year I left you all,” Wukong said, “I drifted with the waves across the Great Eastern Ocean and reached the West Aparagodāniya Continent. I then arrived at the South Jambūdvīpa Continent where I learned human ways, wearing this garment and these shoes. I swaggered along with the clouds for eight or nine years but I’d yet to learn the Great Art. I then crossed the Great Western Ocean and reached the West Aparagodāniya Continent. <sup>17</sup>After searching for a long time, I’d the good fortune to discover an old Patriarch who imparted to me the formula for enjoying the same age as Heaven, the secret of mortality.”

“Such luck’s hard to meet even after ten thousand afflictions!” the humans said, all congratulating him.

“Little ones,” Wukong said, laughing again, “Another delight’s that our entire family’s a name now.”

“What’s the name of the great king?”

“My surname’s Sun,” replied Wukong, “and my religious name’s Wukong.”

When the humans heard this, they all clapped their hands and shouted happily, “If the great king’s Elder Sun, then we’re all Junior Suns, Suns the Third, small Suns, tiny Suns – the Sun Family, the Sun Nation, and the Sun Cave!” So they all came and honoured Elder Sun with large and small bowls of coconut, grape juice, divine flowers, and fruits. *It’s indeed one big happy family! Lo, the surname is 1, the self’s returned to its source. This glory awaits – a name recorded in Heaven!*

**4 Seas & 1000 Mountains all salute to submit; 10 species’ names** (ecclesiastical, earthly, human, divine, and demonic, the winged creatures, the hairy creatures, the armoured creatures, the scaly creatures, & the naked creatures, i.e., humans) **are removed from the 9-Fold Darkness of the Daoist Hell**

The Handsome King’s triumphant return to his home country. After slaying the Monstrous King of Havoc and wrestling from him his huge scimitar, he practiced daily with the little humans the art of war, teaching them how to sharpen bamboos for making spears, file wood for making swords, arrange flags and banners, go on patrol, advance or retreat, and pitch camp. For a long time he played thus with them. Suddenly he grew quiet and sat down, thinking out loud to himself, “The game we’re playing here may turn out to be something quite serious. Suppose we disturb the rulers of humans or fowls, beasts, they become offended; suppose they say that these military exercises of ours are subversive, and raise an army to destroy us. How can we meet them with our bamboo spears and wooden swords? We must have these sharp swords and fine halberds. But what can be done at this moment?”

When the humans heard this, they were all alarmed. “The great king’s observation is very sound,” they said, “but where can we obtain these things?”

As they were speaking, 4 older humans came forward, 2 ladies with red buttocks and 2 bareback men. Coming to the front, they said, “Great King, to be furnished with sharp-edged weapons is a very simple matter.”

“How is it simple?” asked Wukong.

The 4 humans replied, “East of our mountain across two hundred miles of water is the boundary of the Aolai Country. In that country there’s a king who’s numberless men, soldiers in his city, and there are bound to be all kinds of metal-works there. If the great king goes there, he can either buy weapons or have them made. Then you can teach us how to use them for the protection of our mountain and this will be the stratagem for assuring ourselves of perpetuity.”

When Wukong heard this, he was filled with delight. “Play here, all of you,” he said. “Let me make a trip.” *Dear King!* He quickly performed his cloud somersault and crossed the 200 miles of water in no time. On the other side he did indeed discover a city with broad streets and huge marketplaces, countless houses and numerous arches. Under the clear sky and bright sun, people were coming and going constantly. Wukong thought to himself, “There must be ready-made weapons around here. But going down there to buy a few pieces from them is not as good a bargain as acquiring them by magic.” He therefore made the magic sign and recited a spell. Facing the ground on the southwest, he took a deep breath and then blew it out. At once it became a mighty wind, hurtling pebbles and rocks through the air. It was truly terrifying: *thick clouds in vast formation moved over the world; black fog and dusky vapour darkened the Earth; waves churned in seas and rivers, affrighting fishes and crabs; boughs broke in mountain forests, wolves and tigers taking flight. Traders and merchants were gone from stores and shops. No single man was seen at sundry marts and malls. The king retreated to his chamber from the royal court. Martial and civil officials returned to their homes. This wind toppled God’s throne of a millennium and shook to its foundations the 5-Phoenix Tower.* The wind arose and separated the king from his subjects in the Aolai Country. Throughout the various boulevards and marketplaces, every family bolted the doors and windows and no one dared go outside. Wukong then lowered the direction of his cloud and rushed straight through the imperial gate. He found his way to the armoury, knocked open the doors, and saw that there were countless weapons inside. Scimitars, spears, swords, halberds, battle-axes, scythes, whips, rakes, drumsticks, drums, bows, arrows, forks, and lances – every kind was available. Highly pleased, Wukong said to himself, “How many pieces can I possibly carry by myself? I’d better use the magic of body division to transport them.” Dear King! He plucked a handful of hairs, chewed them to pieces in his mouth, and spat them out. Reciting the spell, he cried, “Change!”

They changed into thousands of little men who snatched and grabbed the weapons. Those that were stronger took 6 or 7 pieces, the weaker ones 2 or 3 pieces, and together they emptied out the armoury. Wukong then mounted the cloud and performed the magic of displacement by calling up a great wind that carried all the little humans back to their home. The various humans both great and small were playing outside the cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain. They suddenly heard the sound of wind and saw in mid-air a huge horde of humans approaching, the sight of which made them all flee in terror and hide. In a moment, Wukong lowered his cloud and, shaking himself, collected the pieces of hair back onto his body. All the weapons were piled in front of the mountain. “Little ones,” he shouted, “come and receive your weapons!”

The humans looked and saw Wukong standing alone on level ground. They came running to salute and ask what had happened. Wukong then recounted to them how he had made use of the mighty wind to transport the weapons. After expressing their gratitude, the humans all went to grab at the scimitars, snatch at the swords, wield the axes, scramble for spears, stretch the bows, and mount the arrows. Shouting and screaming, they played all day long. The following day, they marched in formation as usual. Assembling the humans, Wukong found that there were 47000 of them. This assembly greatly impressed all the wild beasts of the mountain – wolves, insects, tigers, leopards, mouse deer, fallow deer, river deer, foxes, wild cats, badgers, lions, elephants, apes, bears, antelopes, bulls, muskoxen, chamois, green 1-horn buffaloes, wild hares, and giant mastiffs. Led by the various demon kings of no fewer than 72 caves, they all came to pay homage to the King. Henceforth they brought annual tributes and answered the roll call made every season. Some of them joined in the manoeuvres; others supplied provisions in accordance with their rank. In an orderly fashion, they made the entire Flower-Fruit Mountain as strong as an iron bucket or a city of metal. The various demon kings also presented metal drums, coloured banners, and helmets. The hurly-burly of marching and drilling went on day after day. While the Handsome King was enjoying all this, he suddenly said to the multitude, “You’ve all become adept with the bow and arrow and proficient in the use of weapons. But this scimitar of mine is truly cumbersome, not at all to my liking. What can I do?”

The 4 elder humans came forward and memorialised, “The great king is a divine sage and therefore it is not fit for him to use an earthly weapon. We don’t know however, whether the great king is able to take a journey through water?”

“Since I’ve known the Way,” said Wukong, “I’ve the ability of seventy-two transformations. The cloud somersault has unlimited power. I’m familiar with the magic of body concealment and the magic of displacement. I can find my way to Heaven or I can enter the Earth. I can walk past the sun and the moon without casting a shadow, and I can penetrate stone and metal without hindrance. Water cannot drown me, nor fire burn me. Is there any place I can’t go to?”

“It’s a good thing that the great king possesses such powers,” said the 4 humans, “for the water below this sheet iron bridge of ours flows directly into the Dragon Palace of the Eastern Ocean. If you’re willing to go down there, Great King, you’ll find the old Dragon King, from whom you may request some kind of weapon. Won’t that be to your liking?”

Hearing this, Wukong said with delight, “Let me make the trip!” Dear King!

He jumped to the bridgehead and employed the magic of water restriction. Making the magic sign with his fingers, he leaped into the waves that parted for him, and he followed the waterway straight to the bottom of the Eastern Ocean. As he was walking, he suddenly ran into a Nature spirit<sup>2</sup> on patrol who stopped him with the question, “What divine sage is this who comes pushing through the water? Speak plainly so that I can announce your arrival.”

Wukong said, “I’m the Heaven-born sage Sun Wukong of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, a near neighbour of your old Dragon King. How is it that you don’t recognise me?”

When the *Nature spirit* heard this, he hurried back to the Water-Crystal Palace to report. “Great King,” he said, “there is outside a Heaven-born sage of the Flower-Fruit Mountain named Sun Wukong. He claims that he is a near neighbour of yours, and he is about to arrive at the palace.”

Aoguang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean arose immediately; accompanied by dragon sons and grandsons, shrimp soldiers and crab generals, he came out for the reception. “High Mortal,” he said, “please come in!” They went into the palace for proper introduction, and after offering Wukong the honoured seat and tea, the king asked, “When did the high mortal become accomplished in the Way and what kind of divine magic did he receive?”

Wukong said, “Since the time of my birth, I’ve left the family to practice self-cultivation. I’ve now acquired a birth-less and deathless body. Recently I’ve been teaching my children how to protect our mountain cave but unfortunately I’m without an appropriate weapon. I’ve heard that my noble neighbour who has long enjoyed living in this green-jade palace and its shell portals must have many divine weapons to spare. I came specifically to ask for one of them.”

When the Dragon King heard this, he could hardly refuse. So he ordered a perch commander to bring out a long-handled scimitar, and presented it to his visitor. “Old man doesn’t know how to use a scimitar,” said Wukong. “I beg you to give me something else.” The Dragon King then commanded a whiting lieutenant together with an eel porter to carry out a 9-pronged fork. Jumping down from his seat, Wukong took hold of it and tried a few thrusts. He put it down, saying, “Light! Much too light! And it doesn’t suit my hand. I beg you to give me another one.”

“High Mortal,” said the Dragon King, laughing, “Won’t you even take a closer look? This fork weighs sixteen hundred and thirty-three kg.”

“It doesn’t suit my hand,” Wukong said, “It doesn’t suit my hand!” The Dragon King was becoming rather fearful; he ordered a bream admiral and a carp brigadier to carry out a giant halberd weighing 3266 kg. When he saw this, Wukong ran forward and took hold of it. He tried a few thrusts and parries and then stuck it in the ground, saying, “It’s still light! Much too light!”

The old Dragon King was completely unnerved. “High Mortal,” he said, “there’s no weapon in my palace heavier than this halberd.”

Laughing, Wukong said, “As the old saying goes, ‘Who worries about the Dragon King’s lacking treasures!’ Go, look some more, and I’ll offer you a good price if you find something I like.”

“There really aren’t any more here,” said the Dragon King.

As they were speaking, the dragon mum and her daughter slipped out and said, “Great King, we can see that this definitely isn’t a sage with meagre abilities. Inside our ocean treasury’s that piece of rare magic iron by which the depth of the Heavenly River<sup>3</sup> is fixed. These past few days the iron has been glowing with a strange and lovely light. Could this be a sign that it’d be taken out to meet this sage?”

“That’s,” said the Dragon King, “the measure with which the Great Yu<sup>4</sup> fixed the depths of rivers and oceans when he conquered the Flood. It’s a piece of magic iron but of what use could it be to him?”

“Let’s not be concerned with whether he could find any use for it,” said the dragon mum. “Let’s give it to him, and he can do whatever he wants with it. The important thing’s to get him out of this palace!”

The old Dragon King agreed and told Wukong the whole story. “Take it out and let me see it,” said Wukong.

Waving his hands, the Dragon King said, “We can’t move it! We can’t even lift it! The high mortal must go there himself to take a look.”

“Where is it?” asked Wukong. “Take me there.”

The Dragon King accordingly led him to the centre of the ocean treasury where all at once they saw a thousand shafts of golden light. Pointing to the spot, the Dragon King said, “That’s it – the thing that’s glowing.”

Wukong girded up his clothes and went forward to touch it: it was an iron rod more than twenty feet long and as thick as a barrel. Using all his might, he lifted it with both hands saying, “It’s a little too long and too thick. It’d be more serviceable if it were somewhat shorter and thinner.” Hardly had he finished speaking when the treasure shrunk a few feet in length and became a layer thinner. “Smaller still would be even better,” said Wukong, giving it another bounce in his hands. Again the treasure became smaller. Highly pleased, Wukong took it out of the ocean treasury to examine it. He found a golden hoop at each end with solid black iron in between. Immediately adjacent to one of the hoops was the inscription, “The Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod. Weight: sixty-one hundred and twenty-four kg.” He thought to himself in secret delight, “This treasure, I suppose, must be most compliant with one’s wishes.” As he walked, he was deliberating in his mind and murmuring to himself, bouncing the rod in his hands, “Shorter and thinner still would be marvellous!” By the time he took it outside, the rod was no more than 20 feet in length and had the thickness of a rice bowl. See how he displayed his power now!

He wielded the rod to make lunges and passes, engaging in mock combat all the way back to the Water-Crystal Palace. The old Dragon King was so terrified that he shook with fear, and the dragon princes were all panic-stricken. Sea-turtles and tortoises drew in their necks; fishes, shrimps, and crabs all hid themselves. Wukong held the treasure in his hands and sat in the Water-Crystal Palace. Laughing, he said to the Dragon King, “I’m indebted to my good neighbour for his profound kindness.”

“Please don’t mention it,” said the Dragon King.

“This piece of iron is very useful,” said Wukong, “but I’ve one further statement to make.”

“What sort of statement does the high mortal wish to make?” asked the Dragon King.

Wukong said, “Had there been no such iron, I’d have let the matter drop. Now that I’ve it in my hands, I can see that I’m wearing the wrong kind of clothes to go with it. What am I to do? If you’ve any martial apparel, you might as well give me some too. I’d thank you most heartily.”

“This, I confess, is not in my possession,” said the Dragon King.

Wukong said, “A solitary guest will not disturb two hosts. Even if you claim that you’ve none, I’ll never walk out of this door.”

“Let the high mortal take the trouble of going to another ocean,” said the Dragon King. “He might turn up something there.”

“To visit three homes is not as convenient as sitting in one,” said Wukong, “I beg you to give me one outfit.”

“I really don’t have one,” said the Dragon King, “for if I did, I’d have presented it to you.”

“Is that so?” said Wukong. “Let me try the iron on you!”

“High mortal,” the Dragon King said nervously, “don’t ever raise your hand! Don’t ever raise your hand! Let me see whether my brothers have any and we’ll try to give you one.”

“Where are your honoured brothers?” asked Wukong.

“They’re,” said the Dragon King, “Aoqin, Dragon King of the Southern Ocean; Aoshun, Dragon King of the Northern Ocean; and Aorun, Dragon King of the Western Ocean.”

"Old man isn't going to their places," said Wukong. "For as the common saying goes: *Three in bond can't compete with two in hand*. I'm merely requesting that you find something casual here and give it to me. That's all."

"There's no need for the high mortal to go anywhere," said the Dragon King. "I've in my palace an iron drum and a golden bell. Whenever there is any emergency, we beat the drum and strike the bell and my brothers are here shortly."

"In that case," said Wukong, "go beat the drum and strike the bell."

The turtle general went at once to strike the bell while the tortoise marshal came to beat the drum. Soon after the drum and the bell had sounded, the Dragon Kings of the 3 Oceans got the message and arrived promptly, all congregating in the outer courtyard. "Elder Brother," said Aoqin, "what emergency made you beat the drum and strike the bell?"

"Good Brother," answered the old Dragon, "it's a long story! We've here a certain Heaven-born sage from the Flower-Fruit Mountain who came here and claimed to be my near neighbour. He subsequently demanded a weapon; the steel fork I presented he deemed too small, and the halberd I offered too light. Finally he himself took that piece of rare, divine iron by which the depth of the Heavenly River was fixed and used it for mock combat. He is now sitting in the palace and also demanding some sort of battle dress. We've none of that here. So we sounded the drum and the bell to invite you all to come. If you happen to have some such outfit, please give it to him so that I can send him out of this door!"

When Aoqin heard this, he was outraged. "Let's brothers call our army together," he said, "And arrest him. What's wrong with that?"

"Don't talk about arresting him!" the old Dragon said, "don't talk about arresting him! That piece of iron – a small stroke with it is deadly and a light tap is fatal! The slightest touch will crack the skin and a small rap will injure the muscles!"

Aorun, the Dragon King of the Western Ocean, said, "Second elder brother should not raise his hand against him. Let us rather assemble an outfit for him and get him out of this place. We can then present a formal complaint to Heaven, and Heaven will send its own punishment."

"You're right," said Aoshun, the Dragon King of the Northern Ocean, "I've here a pair of cloud-treading shoes the colour of lotus root."

Aorun, the Dragon King of the Western Ocean said, "I brought along a cuirass of chain-mail made of yellow gold."

"And I've a cap with erect phoenix plumes, made of red gold," said Aoqin, the Dragon King of the Southern Ocean.

The old Dragon King was delighted and brought them into the Water-Crystal Palace to present the gifts. Wukong duly put on the gold cap, the gold cuirass, cloud-treading shoes, and wielding his compliant rod, he fought his way out in mock combat, yelling to the dragons, "Sorry to have bothered you!"

The Dragon Kings of the 4 Oceans were outraged and they consulted together about filing a formal complaint, of which we make no mention here. Look at that King!

He opened up the waterway and went straight back to the head of the sheet iron bridge. The 4 old mans were leading the other humans and waiting beside the bridge. They suddenly beheld Wukong leaping out of the waves: there was not a drop of water on his body as he walked onto the bridge, all radiant and golden. The various humans were so astonished that they all knelt down, crying, "Great King, what marvels! What marvels! Beaming broadly, Wukong ascended his high throne and set up the iron rod right in the centre. Knowing no better, the humans all came and tried to pick the treasure up. It was rather like a dragonfly attempting to shake an ironwood tree: they could not budge it an inch! Biting their fingers and sticking out their tongues, every one of them said, "O Dad, it's so heavy! How did you ever manage to bring it here?" Wukong walked up to the rod, stretched forth his hands, and picked it up. Laughing, he said to them, "Everything has its owner. This treasure has presided in the ocean treasury for who knows how many thousands of years, and it just happened to glow recently. The Dragon King only recognised it as a piece of black iron, though it is also said to be the divine rarity which fixed the bottom of the Heavenly River. All those fellows together could not lift or move it, and they asked me to take it myself. At first, this treasure was more than twenty feet long and as thick as a barrel. After I struck it once and expressed my feeling that it was too large, it grew smaller. I wanted it smaller still, and again it grew smaller. For a third time I commanded it and it grew smaller still! When I looked at it in the light, it had on it the inscription, 'The Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod. Weight: sixty-one hundred and twenty-four kg.' Stand aside, all of you. Let me ask it to go through some more transformations."

He held the treasure in his hands and called out, "Smaller, smaller, smaller!"

And at once it shrank to the size of a tiny embroidery needle, small enough to be hidden inside the ear. Awestruck, the humans cried, "Great King! Take it out and play with it some more."

The King took it out from his ear and placed it on his palm. "Bigger, bigger, bigger!" he shouted, again it grew to the thickness of a barrel and more than 20 feet long. He became so delighted playing with it that he jumped onto the bridge and walked out of the cave. Grasping the treasure in his hands, he began to perform the magic of cosmic imitation. Bending over, he cried, "Grow!"

And at once grew to be 10000 feet tall with a head like the Tai Mountain and a chest like a rugged peak, eyes like lightning and a mouth like a blood bowl, and teeth like swords and halberds. The rod in his hands was of such a size that its top reached the 33<sup>rd</sup> Heaven and its bottom the 18<sup>th</sup> layer of Hell. Tigers, leopards, wolves, crawling creatures, all the monsters of the mountain, the demon kings of the 72 caves were so terrified that they saluted, paid homage to the King in fear, and trembling. Presently he revoked his magical appearance and changed the treasure back into a tiny embroidery needle stored in his ear. He returned to the cave dwelling but the demon kings of the various caves were still frightened, and they continued to come to pay their respects. At this time, the banners were unfurled, the drums sounded, and the brass gongs struck loudly. A great banquet of a hundred delicacies was given, and the cups were filled to overflowing with the fruit of the vines and the juices of the coconut. They drank and feasted for a long time, and they engaged in military exercises as before. The King made the 4 old mans mighty commanders of his troops by appointing the 2 ladies with red hair as marshals Ma and Liu, and the 2 bareback men as generals Beng and Ba. The 4 mighty commanders, moreover, were entrusted with all matters concerning fortification, pitching camps, reward, and punishment. Having settled all this, the King felt completely at ease to soar on the clouds and ride the mist to tour the 4 seas and disport himself in 1000 mountains. Displaying his martial skill, he made extensive visits to various heroes and warriors; performing his magic, he made many good friends. At this time moreover, he entered into fraternal alliance with 6 other monarchs: the Bull Monster King, the Dragon Monster King, the Garuda Monster King, the Giant Lynx King, the Macaque King, and the Orangutan King. Together with the Handsome King, they formed a fraternal order of 7. Day after day they discussed civil and military arts, exchanged cups and goblets, recited poetry and exercised to the strings. They gathered in the morning and parted in the evening; there was not a single pleasure that they overlooked, covering a distance of 10000 miles as if it were but the span of their own courtyard. As the saying has it, *1 nod of the head goes farther than 3000 miles; 1 twist of the torso covers more than 800*. One day, the 4 mighty commanders had been told to prepare a great banquet in their own cave, and the 6 kings were invited to the feast. They killed cows and slaughtered horses; they sacrificed to Heaven and Earth. The various imps were ordered to exercise and recite, and they all drank until they were thoroughly drunk. After sending the 6 kings off, Wukong also rewarded the leaders great and small with gifts. Reclining in the shade of pine trees near the sheet iron bridge, he fell asleep in a moment. The 4 mighty commanders led the crowd to form a protective circle around him, not daring to raise their voices. In his sleep the Handsome King saw 2 men approach with a summons with the 3 Chinese characters written on it:

*Sun Wukong*

They walked up to him, tied him up with a rope, and dragged him off without a word. The soul of the Handsome King was reeling from side to side. They reached the edge of a city. The King was gradually coming to himself, when he lifted up his head and suddenly saw above the city an iron sign bearing in large letters the 4 words:

The Region of Darkness

The Handsome King at once became fully conscious. "The Region of Darkness's the abode of Yama, King of Death," he said. "Why I'm here?"

"Your age in the World of Life has come to an end," the 2 men said. "The two of us were given this summons to arrest you."

When the King heard this, he said, "I, old man himself have transcended the Three Regions and the Five Phases; <sup>5</sup> hence I'm no longer under Yama's jurisdiction. Why's he so confused that he wants to arrest me?"

The 2 summoners paid scant attention. Yanking and pulling, they were determined to haul him inside. Growing angry, the King whipped out his treasure. One wave of it turned it into the thickness of a rice bowl; he raised his hands once, and the 2 summoners were reduced to hash. He untied the rope, freed his hands, and fought his way into the city, wielding the rod. Bull-headed demons hid in terror, and horse-faced demons fled in every direction. A band of ghost soldiers ran up to the Palace of Darkness, crying, "Great Kings! Disaster! Disaster! Outside there's a hairy-faced thunder god fighting his way in!"

Their report alarmed the 10 Kings of the Underworld so much that they quickly straightened out their attire and went out to see what was happening. Discovering a fierce and angry figure, they lined up according to their ranks and greeted him with loud voices: "High Mortal, tell us your name. High Mortal, tell us your name."

"I'm the Heaven-born sage Sun Wukong from the Water-Curtain Cave in the Flower-Fruit Mountain," said the King, "what kind of officials are you?"

"We're the Emperors of Darkness," answered the 10 Kings, saluting, "the Ten Kings of the Underworld."

"Tell me each of your names at once," said Wukong, "or I'll give you a drubbing."

The 10 Kings said, "We're: King Qinguang, King of the Beginning River. King of the Poem Emperor, King of Avenging Ministers, King Yama, King of Equal Ranks, King of the Tai Mountain, King of City Markets, King of the Complete Change, and King of the Turning Wheel."<sup>6</sup>

"Since you've all ascended the thrones of kingship," said Wukong, "you'd be intelligent beings, responsible in rewards and punishments. Why're you so ignorant of good and evil? Old man's acquired the Dao and attained mortality. I enjoy the same age as Heaven and I've transcended the Three Regions and leapt clear of the Five Phases. Why then did you send men to arrest me?"

"High Mortal," said the 10 Kings, "let your anger subside. There're many people in this world with the same name and surname. Couldn't the summoners have made a mistake?"

"Nonsense! Nonsense!" said Wukong. "The proverb says, 'Officials err, clerks err but the summoner never errs! Quick, bring out your register of births, deaths, and let me have a look.' When the 10 Kings heard this, they invited him to go into the palace to see for himself. Holding his compliant rod, Wukong went straight up to the Palace of Darkness and, facing south, sat down in the middle. The 10 Kings immediately had the judge in charge of the records bring out his books for examination. The judge who did not dare tarry hastened into a side room and brought out 5 or 6 books of documents and the ledgers on the 10 species of living beings. He went through them one by one – shorthaired creatures, furry creatures, winged creatures, crawling creatures, and scaly creatures – but he did not find his name. He then proceeded to the file on humans. Though this human resembled a human being, he was not listed under the names of men; though he resembled the short-haired creatures, he did not dwell in their kingdoms; though he resembled other animals, he was not subject to the unicorn; and though he resembled flying creatures, he was not governed by the phoenix. He had therefore a separate ledger that Wukong examined himself. He found his name recorded with the description under the heading:

*Soul 1350: Sun Wukong. Heaven-born Stone Human. Age: 342 years. A good end.*

Wukong said, "I really don't remember my age. All I want is to erase my name. Bring me a brush." The judge hurriedly fetched the brush and soaked it in heavy ink. Wukong took the ledger on humans and crossed out all the names he could find in it. Throwing down the ledger, he said, "That ends the account! That ends the account! Now I'm truly not your subject."

Brandishing his rod, he fought his way out of the Region of Darkness. The 10 Kings did not dare approach him. They went instead to the Green Cloud Palace to consult the Nun King Kṣītarbha and made plans to report the incident to Heaven that does not concern us for the moment. While our King was fighting his way out of the city, he was suddenly caught in a clump of grass and stumbled. Waking up with a start, he realised that it was all a dream. As he was stretching himself, he heard the 4 mighty commanders and the various humans crying with a loud voice, "Great King! How much juice did you imbibe? You've slept all night long. Aren't you awake yet?"

"Sleeping is nothing to get excited about," said Wukong, "but I dreamed that two men came to arrest me, and I didn't perceive their intention until they brought me to the outskirts of the Region of Darkness. Showing my power, I protested right up to the Palace of Darkness and argued with the Ten Kings. I went through our ledger of births, deaths, and crossed out all our names. Those fellows have no hold over us now."

The various humans all saluted to express their gratitude. From that time onward there were many mountain humans who did not grow old for their names were not registered in the Underworld. When the Handsome King finished his account of what had happened, the 4 mighty commanders reported the story to the demon kings of various caves who all came to tender their congratulations. Only a few days had passed when the 6 sworn brothers also came to congratulate him, all of them delighted about the cancellation of the names. We'll not elaborate here on their joyful gathering and turn instead to the Great Benevolent Sage of Heaven, the Celestial Jade Emperor of the Most Venerable demigod who was holding court one day in the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists, the Cloud Palace of Golden Arches. The divine ministers, civil and military were just gathering for the morning session when suddenly the Daoist mortal Qiu Hongzhi<sup>7</sup> announced, "Your Majesty, outside the Translucent Palace, Aoguang the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean's awaiting your command to present a memorial to the Throne." The Jade Emperor gave the order to have him brought forth and Aoguang was led into the Hall of Divine Mists. After he had paid his respects, a divine page boy in charge of documents received the memorial, and the Jade Emperor read it from the beginning. The memorial said: *From the lowly water region of the Eastern Ocean at the East East-Videha Continent, the small dragon subject, Aoguang, humbly informs the Wise Lord of Heaven, the Most Eminent High God and Ruler, that a bogus mortal, Sun Wukong, bom of the Flower-Fruit Mountain and resident of the Water-Curtain Cave has recently abused your small dragon, gaining a seat in his water home by force. He demanded a weapon, employing power and intimidation; he asked for martial attire, unleashing violence and threats. He terrorised my water kinsmen, and scattered turtles and tortoises. The Dragon of the Southern Ocean trembled; the Dragon of the Western Ocean was filled with horror; the Dragon of the Northern Ocean drew back his head to surrender; and your subject Aoguang flexed his body to do obeisance. We presented him with the divine treasure of an iron rod and the gold cap with phoenix plumes; giving him also a chain-mail cuirass and cloud-treading shoes, we sent him off courteously. But even then he was bent on displaying his martial prowess and magical powers, and all he could say to us was "Sorry to have bothered you!" We're indeed no match for him, nor are we*

able to subdue him. Your subject therefore presents this petition and humbly begs for imperial justice. We earnestly beseech you to dispatch the Heavenly host and capture this monster, so that tranquillity may be restored to the oceans and prosperity to the Lower Region. Thus we present this memorial.

When the Holy Emperor had finished reading, he gave the command: "Let the Dragon God return to the ocean. We'll send our generals to arrest the culprit." The old Dragon King gratefully touched his forehead and left. From below the Mortal Elder Ge, the Celestial Master<sup>®</sup> also brought forth the report. "Your Majesty, the Minister of Darkness, King Qinguang supported by the Nun, King Kṣitigarbha, Pope of the Underworld, has arrived to present his memorial." The jade girl in charge of communication came from the side to receive this document that the Jade Emperor also read from the beginning. The memorial said:

The Region of Darkness is the nether region proper to Earth. As Heaven is for gods and Earth for ghosts so life and death proceed in cyclic succession. Fowls are born and animals die; male and female, they multiply. Births and transformations, the male begotten of the procreative female – such is the order of Nature, and it cannot be changed. But now appears Sun Wukong, a Heaven-born baneful human from the Water-Curtain Cave in the Flower-Fruit Mountain who practices evil and violence, and resists our proper summons. Exercising magic powers, he utterly defeated the ghostly messengers of 9-fold Darkness; exploiting brute force, he terrorised the 10 Merciful Kings. He caused great confusion in the Palace of Darkness; he abrogated by force the Register of Names, so that the category of humans is now beyond control, and inordinately long life is given to the simian family. The wheel of transmigration is stopped, for birth and death are eliminated in each kind of human. Your poor monk therefore risks offending your Heavenly authority in presenting this memorial. We humbly beg you to send forth your divine army and subdue this monster, to the end that life and death may once more be regulated and the Underworld rendered perpetually secure. Respectfully we present this memorial.

When the Jade Emperor had finished reading, he again gave a command: "Let the Lord of Darkness return to the Underworld. We'll send our generals to arrest this culprit."

King Qinguang also touched his head to the ground gratefully and left. The Great Heavenly demigod called together his various mortal subjects, both civil and military and asked, "When's this baneful human born and in which generation did he begin his career? How's it that he's become so powerfully accomplished in the Way?"

Scarcely had he finished speaking when 1000-Mile Eye and Fair-Wind Ear stepped forward from the ranks. "This human's," they said, "the Heaven-born stone human of three centuries ago. At that time he didn't seem to amount to much and we don't know where he acquired the knowledge of self-cultivation these last few years and became a mortal. Now he knows how to subdue dragons and tame tigers <sup>and thus he is able to annul by force the Register of Death.</sup>"

"Which one of you divine generals," asked the Jade Emperor, "wishes to go down there to subdue him?"

Scarcely had he finished speaking when the Long-Life Spirit of the Planet Venus came forward from the ranks and saluted himself. "Highest and Holiest," he said, "within the three regions, all creatures endowed with the nine apertures can become mortals through exercise. It isn't surprising that this human with a body nurtured by Heaven and Earth, a frame born of the sun and moon should achieve mortality, seeing that his head points to Heaven and his feet walk on Earth, and he feeds on the dew and the mist. Now that he has the power to subdue dragons and tame tigers, how is he different from a human being? Your subject therefore makes so bold as to ask Your Majesty to remember the compassionate grace of Creation and issue a decree of pacification. Let him be summoned to the Upper Region and given some kind of official duties. His name will be recorded in the Register and we can control him here. If he's receptive to the Heavenly decree, he'll be rewarded and promoted hereafter; but if he is disobedient to your command, we'll arrest him forthwith. Such an action will spare us a military expedition in the first place and permit us to receive another mortal in an orderly manner into our midst in the second."

The Jade Emperor was highly pleased with this statement, and he said, "We'll follow the counsel of our minister." He then ordered the Star Spirit of Poems, Letters to compose the decree, and delegated the Gold Star of Venus to be the viceroy of peace. Having received the decree, the Gold Star went out of the South Heaven Gate lowered the direction of his hallowed cloud, headed straight for the Flower-Fruit Mountain, and the Water-Curtain Cave. He said to the various little humans, "I'm the Heavenly messenger sent from above. I've with me an imperial decree to invite your great king to go to the Upper Region. Report this to him quickly!"

The humans outside the cave passed the word along one by one until it reached the depth of the cave. "Great King," one of the men said, "there's an old man outside bearing a document on his back. He says that he's a messenger sent from Heaven and has an imperial decree of invitation for you."

Upon hearing this, the Handsome King was exceedingly pleased. "These last two days," he said, "I was just thinking about taking a little trip to Heaven and the heavenly messenger's already come to invite me!"

The King quickly straightened out his attire and went to the door for the reception. The Gold Star came into the centre of the cave and stood still with his face toward the south. "I'm the Gold Star of Venus from the West," he said. "I came down to Earth, bearing the imperial decree of pacification from the Jade Emperor, and invite you to go to Heaven to receive a mortal appointment."

Laughing, Wukong said, "I'm most grateful for the Old Star's visit." He then gave the order: "Little ones, prepare a banquet to entertain our guest."

The Gold Star said, "As a bearer of imperial decree, I can't remain here long. I must ask the Great King to go with me at once. After your glorious promotion, we'll have many occasions to converse at our leisure."

"We're honoured by your presence," said Wukong; "I'm sorry that you've to leave with empty hands!" He then called the 4 mighty commanders together for this admonition: "Be diligent in teaching and drilling the young ones. Let me go up to Heaven to take a look and to see whether I can have you all brought up there too to live with me." The 4 mighty commanders indicated their obedience. This King mounted the cloud with the Gold Star and rose up into the sky. *Truly he ascends the high rank of mortals from the sky: his name's enrolled in cloud columns and treasure scrolls.*

## 004

### Appointed a Ban-Horse, he'd be content? Named Equal to Heaven, he's still unappeased

The Gold Star of Venus left the depths of the cave dwelling with the Handsome King, and together they rose by mounting the clouds. But the cloud somersault of Wukong is no common magic; its speed is tremendous. Soon he left the Gold Star far behind and arrived first at the South Heaven Gate. He was about to dismount from the cloud and go in when the Deity-King Virūḍhaka leading Pang, Liu, Kou, Bi, Deng, Xin, Zhang, and Tao, the various divine heroes, barred the way with spears, scimitars, swords, and halberds and refused him entrance. The King said, "What a deceitful fellow that Gold Star is! If old man has been invited here, why have these people been ordered to use their swords and spears to bar my entrance?" He was protesting loudly when the Gold Star arrived in haste. "Old man," said Wukong angrily to his face, "why did you deceive me? You told me that I was invited by the Jade Emperor's decree of pacification. Why then did you get these people to block the Heaven Gate and prevent my entering?"

"Let the Great King calm down," the Gold Star said, laughing. "Since you've never been to the Hall of Heaven before, nor have you been given a name, you're quite unknown to the various heavenly guardians. How can they let you in on their own authority? Once you've seen the Heavenly demigod, received an appointment, and had your name listed in the Mortal Register, you can go in and out as you please. Who would then obstruct your way?"

"If that's how it is," said Wukong, "it's all right. But I'm not going in by myself."

"Then go in with me," said the Gold Star, pulling him by the hand.

As they approached the gate, the Gold Star called out loudly, "Guardians of the Heaven Gate, lieutenants great and small, make way! This person is a mortal from the Region Below whom I've summoned by the imperial decree of the Jade Emperor." The Deity-King Virūḍhaka and the various divine heroes immediately lowered their weapons and stepped aside, and the King finally believed what he had been told. He walked slowly inside with the Gold Star and looked around. For it was truly *his 1<sup>st</sup> ascent to the Region Above, sudden entrance into the Hall of Heaven where 10000 shafts of golden light whirled as a coral rainbow and a thousand layers of hallowed air diffused mist of purple. Look at that South Heaven Gate! Its deep shades of green from glazed tiles were made; its radiant battlements adomed with treasure jade. On 2 sides were posted scores of celestial sentinels, each of whom, standing tall beside the pillars, carried bows and clutched banners. All around were sundry divine beings in golden armour, each of them holding halberds and whips or wielding scimitars and swords. Impressive may be the outer court; overwhelming is the sight within! In the inner halls stood several huge pillars circled by red-whiskered dragons whose golden scales gleamed in the sun. There were moreover, a few long bridges; above them crimson-headed phoenixes circled with soaring plumes of many hues. Bright mist shimmered in the light of the sky. Green fog descending obscured the stars. 33 Heavenly mansions were found up here with names like the Scattered Cloud, the Vaiśrvaṇa, the Pāncavidyā, the Suyāma, the Nirmānaratī ...<sup>1</sup> on the roof of every mansion the ridge held a stately golden beast. There were also the 72 treasure halls with names like the Morning Assembly, the Transcendent Void, the Precious Light, the Heavenly King, the Divine Minister ... in every hall beneath the pillars stood rows of jade unicorn. There were flowers unfading in 1000 millennia on the Platform of Canopus;<sup>2</sup> beside the oven for refining herbs, there were exotic grasses growing green for ten millennia. He went before the Tower of Homage to the Sage where he saw robes of royal purple gauze brilliant as stars refulgent, caps the shape of hibiscus, resplendent with gold and precious stones, pins of jade and shoes of pearl, and purple sashes and golden ornaments. When the golden bells swayed to their striking, the memorial of the 3 Judges<sup>3</sup> would cross the vermilion courtyard; when the drums of Heaven were sounded, 10000 sages of the royal audience would honour the Jade Emperor. He went to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists, too where nails of gold penetrated frames of jade, and colourful phoenixes exercised atop scarlet doors. Here were covered bridges and winding corridors displaying everywhere openwork carvings most elegant; and eaves crowding together in layers 3 and 4, on each of which reared up phoenixes and dragons. There was high above a round dome big, bright, brilliant – its shape, a huge gourd of purple gold below which guardian goddesses hung out their fans, and jade maidens held up their mortal veils. Ferocious were the sky marshals overseeing the court; dignified, the divine officials protecting the Throne. Tablets of the Great Monad Elixir were heaped there at the centre on a crystal platter; rising out of the cornelian vases were several branches of twisting coral so it was that rare goods of every order were found in Heaven's Hall, and nothing like them on Earth could ever be seen – those golden arches, silver coaches, and that Heavenly house, those coralline blooms and jasper plants with their buds of jade. The jade rabbit passed the platform to adore the king. The golden crow flew by to worship the sage.* <sup>4</sup>Blessed was the King coming to this Heavenly realm, he who was not mired in the filthy soil of man. The Gold Star of Venus led the Handsome King to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists and without waiting for further announcement, they went into the imperial presence. While the Star saluted himself, Wukong stood erect by him. Showing no respect, he cocked his ear only to listen to the report of the Gold Star. "According to your decree," said the Gold Star, "your subject has brought the bogus mortal."

"Which one is the bogus mortal?" asked the Jade Emperor graciously.

Only then did Wukong salute and reply, "None other than old man!"

Blanching with horror, the various divine officials said, "That wild human! Already he's failed to salute himself before the Throne and now he dares to come forward with such an insolent reply as *none other than old man!* He's worthy of death, worthy of death!"

"That fellow Sun Wukong's a bogus mortal from the Region Below," announced the Jade Emperor, "and he's only recently acquired the form of a human being. We'll pardon him this time for his ignorance of court etiquette."

"Thank you, Your Majesty," cried the various divine officials.

Only then did the King salute long with raised hands and utter a cry of gratitude. The Jade Emperor then ordered the divine officials, both civil and military to see what vacant appointment there might be for Sun Wukong to receive. From the side came the Star Spirit of Wuqu who reported, "In every mansion and hall everywhere in the Palace of Heaven, there is no lack of ministers. Only at the imperial stables is a supervisor needed."

"Let him be made a Ban-Horse Plague," <sup>5</sup> proclaimed the Jade Emperor.

The various subjects again shouted their thanks but Human only saluted deeply and gave a loud whoop of gratitude. The Jade Emperor then sent the Star Spirit of Jupiter to accompany him to the stables. The King went happily with the Star Spirit of Jupiter to the stables in order to assume his duties. After the Star Spirit had returned to his own mansion, the new officer gathered together the deputy and assistant supervisors, the accountants and stewards, and other officials both great and small and made thorough investigation of all the affairs of the stables. There were about a thousand celestial horses, <sup>6</sup> and they were all Hualius, Chizhis, Lu'ers, Xianlis, Consorts of Dragons, Purple Swallows, Folded Wings, Suxiangs, Juetis, Silver Hooves, Yaoniaos, Flying Yellows, Chestnuts, *Fast-er-than-Arrows, Red Hares, Speedier-than-Lights, Leaping Lights, Vaulting Shadows, Rising Fogs, Triumphant Yellows, Wind Chasers, Distance Breakers, Flying Pinions, Surging Airs, Rushing Winds, Fiery Lightning, Copper Sparrows, Drifting Clouds, Dragon-like pie-bald, Tiger-like pintos, Dust Quenchers, Purple Scales, Ferghanas'* from the 4 Corners like the 8 Steeds, and 9 Stallions they have no rivals within a thousand miles! Such are these fine horses. Every one of which neighs like the wind and gallops like thunder to show a mighty spirit. They tread the mist and mount the clouds with unflagging strength. Our King went through the lists and made a thorough inspection of the horses. Within the imperial stables, the accountants were in charge of getting supplies; the stewards groomed and washed the horses, chopped hay, watered them, and prepared their food; and the deputies and assistants saw to the overall management. Never resting, the Bima oversaw the care of the horses, fussing with them by day and watching over them diligently by night. Those horses that wanted to sleep were stirred up and fed; those that wanted to gallop were caught and placed in the stalls. When the celestial horses saw him, they all behaved most properly and they were so well cared for that their flanks became swollen with fat. More than half a month soon went by, and on one leisurely morning, the various department ministers gave a banquet to welcome and congratulate him. While they were drinking happily, the King suddenly put down his cup and asked: "What sort of rank's this Ban-Horse Plague of mine?"

"The rank and the title are the same," they said.

"But what ministerial grade's it?"  
"It doesn't have a grade," they said.  
"If it doesn't have a grade," said the King, "I suppose it must be the very highest."  
"Not at all," they replied, "it can only be called *the unclassified!*"  
The King said, "What do you mean by *the unclassified?*"

"It's really the meanest level," they said. "This kind of minister's the lowest of the low ranks; hence he can only look after horses. Take the case of Your Honour who have been so diligent in discharging your duties since your arrival. If the horses are fattened, you'll only earn yourself a *Fairly Good!* If they look at all thin, you'll be roundly rebuked and if they're seriously hurt or wounded, you'll be prosecuted and fined."

When the King heard this, fire leaped up from his heart. "So that's the contempt they've for old man!" he cried angrily, gnashing his teeth. "At the Flower-Fruit Mountain I was honoured as king and part-iarch. How dare they trick me into coming to look after horses for them, if horse-tending is such a menial service, reserved only for the young and lowly? Is such treatment worthy of me? I'm quitting! I'm quitting! I'm leaving right now!" With a crash, he kicked over his official desk and took the treasure out of his ear. One wave of his hand and it had the thickness of a rice bowl. Delivering blows in all directions, he fought his way out of the imperial stables and went straight to the South Heaven Gate. The various celestial guardians, knowing that he had been officially appointed a Ban-Horse Plague did not dare stop him and allowed him to fight his way out of the Heaven Gate. In a moment, he lowered the direction of his cloud and returned to the Flower-Fruit Mountain. The 4 mighty commanders were seen drilling troops with the Monster Kings of various caves. "Little ones," this King cried in a loud voice, "old man's returned!"

The flock of humans all came to salute and received him into the depths of the cave dwelling. As the King ascended his throne, they busily prepared a banquet to welcome him. "Receive our congratulations, Great King," they said. "Having gone to the region above for more than ten years, you must be returning in success and glory."

"I've been away for only half a month," said the King. "How can it be more than ten years?"  
"Great King," said the various humans, "you're unaware of time and season when you're in Heaven. One day in Heaven above is equal to a year on Earth. May we ask the Great King what ministerial appointment he received?"

"Don't mention that! Don't mention that!" said the King, waving his hand. "It embarrasses me to death! That Jade Emperor does not know how to use talent. Seeing the features of old man, he appointed me to something called the Ban-Horse Plague that actually means taking care of horses for him. It's a job too low even to be classified! I didn't know this when I first assumed my duties, and so I managed to have some fun at the imperial stables. But when I asked my colleagues today, I discovered what a degraded position it was. I was so furious that I knocked over the banquet they were giving me and rejected the title. That's why I came back down."

"Welcome back!" said the various humans, "welcome back! Our Great King can be the sovereign of this blessed cave dwelling with the greatest honour and happiness. Why'd he go away to be someone's stable boy?"

"Little ones," they cried, "send up the juice quickly and cheer up our Great King."  
As they were drinking juice and conversing happily, someone came to report: "Great King, there are two one-horned demon kings outside who want to see you."

"Show them in," said the King. The demon kings straightened out their attire, ran into the cave, and saluted themselves. "Why did you want to see me?" asked the Handsome King.  
"We've long heard that the Great King is receptive to talents," said the demon kings, "but we'd no reason to request your audience. Now we learn that our Great King's received a divine appointment and returned in success and glory. We've come therefore to present the Great King with a red and yellow robe for his celebration. If you're not disdainful of the uncouth and the lowly and willing to receive us plebeians, we'll serve you as dogs or as horses." Highly pleased, the King put on the red and yellow robe while the rest of them lined up joyfully and did homage. He then appointed the demon kings to be the Vanguard Commanders, Marshals of the Forward Regiments. After expressing their thanks, the demon kings asked again, "Since our Great King's in Heaven for a long time, may we ask what kind of appointment he received?"

"The Jade Emperor belittles the talented," said the King. "He only made me something called the Ban-Horse Plague."  
Hearing this, the demon kings said again, "Great King's such divine powers! Why'd you take care of horses for him? What's there to stop you from assuming the rank of the Great Sage Equal to Heaven?"

When the King heard these words, he could not conceal his delight, shouting repeatedly, "Bravo! Bravo! Make me a banner immediately," he ordered the 4 mighty commanders, "and inscribe on it in large words, *The Great Sage Equal to Heaven*. Erect a pole to hang it on. From now on, address me only as the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, and the title Great King will no longer be permitted. The Monster Kings of the various caves will also be informed so that it will be known to all."

Of this we'll speak no further. We now refer to the Jade Emperor who held court the next day. The Celestial Master Zhang<sup>8</sup> was seen leading the deputy and the assistant of the imperial stables to come before the vermilion courtyard. "Your Majesty," they said, saluting themselves, "the newly appointed Ban-Horse Plague, Sun Wukong objected to his rank as being too low and left the Heavenly Palace yesterday in rebellion."

Meanwhile, the Deity-King Virūḍhaka leading the various celestial guardians from the South Heaven Gate also made the report, "The Ban-Horse Plague has walked out of the Heaven Gate for reasons unknown to us."

When the Jade Emperor heard this, he made the proclamation: "Let the two divine commanders and their followers return to their duties. We'll send forth celestial soldiers to capture this monster." From among the ranks, Deity-King Li<sup>9</sup> who was the Pagoda Bearer and his 3<sup>rd</sup> Prince Naṭa came forward and presented their request, saying, "Your Majesty, though your humble subjects aren't gifted, we await your authorisation to subdue this monster."

Delighted, the Jade Emperor appointed Pagoda Bearer Deity-King Li Jing to be grand marshal for subduing the monster, and promoted 3<sup>rd</sup> Prince Naṭa to be the great deity in charge of the 3-Platform Assembly of the Saints. They were to lead an expeditionary force at once for the Region Below. Deity-King Li and Naṭa saluted to take leave and went back to their own mansion. After reviewing the troops, their captains, lieutenants, they appointed Mighty-Spirit God to be Vanward Commander, the Fish-Belly General to bring up the rear, and the General of the Nature spirits to urge the troops on. In a moment they left by the South Heaven Gate and went straight to the Flower-Fruit Mountain. A level piece of land was selected for encampment, and the order was then given to the Mighty-Spirit God to provoke battle. Having received his order and having buckled and knotted his armour properly, the Mighty-Spirit God grasped his spreading-flower axe and came to the Water-Curtain Cave. There in front of the cave he saw a great mob of monsters, all of them wolves, insects, tigers, leopards, and the like; they were all jumping, growling, brandishing their swords, and waving their spears. "Damnable beasts!" shouted the Mighty-Spirit God. "Hurry and tell the Ban-Horse Plague that I, a great general from Heaven have by the authorisation of the Jade Emperor come to subdue him. Tell him to come out quickly and surrender lest all of you be annihilated!"

Running pell-mell into the cave, those monsters shouted the report, "Disaster! Disaster!"

"What sort of disaster?" asked the King.  
"There's a celestial warrior outside," said the monsters, "who claims the title of an imperial envoy. He says he came by the holy decree of the Jade Emperor to subdue you, orders you to go out quickly, and surrender lest we lose our lives."

Hearing this, the King commanded, "Get my battle dress!" He quickly donned his red gold cap, pulled on his yellow gold cuirass, slipped on his cloud-treading shoes, and seized the compliant golden-hooped rod. He led the crowd outside and set them up in battle formation. The Mighty-Spirit God opened wide his eyes and stared at this magnificent King: *the gold cuirass worn on his body was brilliant and bright; the gold cap on his head also glistened in the light. In his hands was a staff, the golden-hooped rod that well became the cloud-treading shoes on his feet. His eyes glowered strangely like burning stars. Hanging past his shoulders were two ears, forked and hard. His remarkable body knew many ways of change, his voice resounded like bells, and chimes. This Ban-Horse Plague with beaked mouth and gaping teeth aimed high to be the Equal to Heaven Sage.* "Lawless human," the Mighty-Spirit God roared powerfully, "do you recognise me?"  
When the Great Sage heard these words, he asked quickly, "What sort of dull-witted deity are you? Old man's yet to meet you! State your name at once!"

"Fraudulent simian," cried the Mighty-Spirit, "what do you mean, you don't recognise me? I'm the Celestial General of Mighty-Spirit, the Vanward Commander and subordinate to Deity-King Li, the Pagoda Bearer from the divine empyrean. I've come by the imperial decree of the Jade Emperor to receive your submission. Strip yourself of your apparel immediately and yield to the Heavenly grace, so that this mountain-full of creatures can avoid execution. If you dare but utter half a 'No,' you'll be reduced to powder in seconds!"

When the King heard those words, he was filled with anger. "Reckless simpleton!" he cried. "Stop bragging and wagging your tongue! I'd have killed you with one stroke of my rod but then I'd have no one to communicate my message. So I'll spare your life for the moment. Go back to Heaven quickly and inform the Jade Emperor that he has no regard for talent. Old man's unlimited abilities. Why did he ask me to mind horses for him? Take a good look at the words on this banner. If I'm promoted according to its title, I'll lay down my arms, the cosmos will then be fair, and tranquil. But if he doesn't agree to my demand, I'll fight my way up to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists, and he'll even be unable to sit on his dragon throne!" When the Mighty-Spirit God heard these words, he opened his eyes wide, facing the wind, and saw indeed a tall pole outside the cave. On the pole hung a banner bearing in large letters the words:

The Great Sage Equal to Heaven

The Mighty-Spirit God laughed scornfully 3 times and jeered, "Lawless human! How fatuous can you be and how arrogant! So you want to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven! Be good enough to take a bit of my axe first!"

Aiming at his head, he hacked at him but being a knowledgeable fighter, the King was not unnerved. He met the blow at once with his golden-hooped rod, and this exciting battle was on. *The rod was named Compliant; the axe was called Spreading Flower. The 2 of them did not yet know their weakness or strength, meeting suddenly but axe and rod clashed left and right. One concealed secret powers most wondrous; the other vaunted openly his vigour and might. They used magic – blowing out cloud and puffing up fog; they stretched their hands, splattering mud and spraying sand. The might of the celestial battler had its way: but the Human had boundless power of change. The rod uplifted – a dragon played in water; the axe arrived – a phoenix sliced through flowers. Mighty-Spirit whose name spread through the world in prowess truly could not match the other one. The Great Sage whirling lightly his iron staff could numb the body with one blow on the head.* The Mighty-Spirit God could oppose him no longer and allowed the King to aim a mighty blow at his head that he hastily sought to parry with his axe. With a crack the axe handle split in two, and Mighty-Spirit turned swiftly to flee for his life. "Imbecile! Imbecile!" laughed the King, "I've already spared you. Go and report my message at once!"

Back at the camp, the Mighty-Spirit God went straight to see the Pagoda Bearer Deity-King. Huffing and puffing, he knelt down saying, "The Ban-Horse Plague's indeed great magic powers! Your unworthy warrior can't prevail against him. Defeated, I've come to beg your pardon."

"This fellow's blunted our will to fight," said Deity-King Li angrily. "Take him out and have him executed!"

From the side came Prince Naṭa who said, saluting deeply, "Let your anger subside, Dad King, and pardon for the moment the guilt of Mighty-Spirit. Permit your child to go into battle once and we'll know the long and short of the matter."

The Deity-King heeded the admonition and ordered Mighty-Spirit to go back to his camp and await trial. This Prince Naṭa leaped from his camp and dashed to the Water-Curtain Cave, properly armed. Wukong was just dismissing his troops when he saw Naṭa approaching fiercely. Dear Prince! *2 boyish tufts barely cover his skull. His flowing hair has yet to reach the shoulders. A rare mind, alert and intelligent. A noble frame, pure and elegant. He is indeed the unicorn son from Heaven above, truly mortal as the phoenix of mist and smoke. This seed of dragon has by nature uncommon features. His tender age shows no relation to any worldly kin. He carries on his body 6 kinds of magic weapons. He flies, he leaps; he can change without restriction. Now by the golden-mouth proclamation of the Jade Emperor he is appointed to the Assembly: its name, the 3 Platforms.* <sup>10</sup>Wukong drew near and asked, "Whose little brother are you and what do you want, barging through my gate?"

"Lawless monstrous human!" shouted Naṭa. "Don't you recognise me? I'm Naṭa, third son of the Pagoda Bearer Deity-King. I'm under the imperial commission of the Jade Emperor to come and arrest you."

"Little prince," said Wukong laughing, "your baby teeth haven't even fallen out and your natal hair is still damp! How dare you talk so big? I'm going to spare your life and won't fight you. Just take a look at the words on my banner and report them to the Jade Emperor above. Grant me this title and you'll not need to stir your forces. I'll submit on my own. If you don't satisfy my cravings, I'll surely fight my way up to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists." Lifting his head to look, Naṭa saw the words:

Great Sage Equal to Heaven

"What great power does this monstrous human possess," said Naṭa, "that he dares claim such a title? Fear not! Swallow my sword."

"I'll just stand here quietly," said Wukong, "and you can take a few hacks at me with your sword."

Young Naṭa grew angry. "Change!" he yelled loudly and changed at once into a fearsome person having 3 heads and 6 arms.



In his hands he held 6 kinds of weapons: a monster-stabbing sword, a monster-cleaving scimitar, a monster-binding rope, a monster-taming club, an embroidered ball, and a fiery wheel. Brandishing these weapons, he mounted a frontal attack. “This little brother does know a few tricks!” said Wukong, somewhat alarmed by what he saw. “But don’t be rash. Watch my magic!” Dear Great Sage! He shouted, “Change!” and he too transformed himself into a creature with 3 heads and 6 arms. 1 wave of the golden-hooped rod and it became 3 staffs that were held with 6 hands. The conflict was truly earth-shaking and made the very mountains tremble. What a battle! *The 6-armed Prince Naṭa. The Heaven-born Handsome Stone King. Meeting, each met his match and found each to be from the same source. One was consigned to come down to Earth. The other in guile disturbed the universe. The edge of the monster-stabbing sword was quick; the keen, monster-cleaving scimitar alarmed demons and gods; the monster-binding rope was like a flying snake; the monster-taming club was like the head of a wolf; the lightning-propelled fiery wheel was like darting flames; hither and thither the embroidered ball rotated. The 3 compliant rods of the Great Sage protected the front and guarded the rear with care and skill. A few rounds of bitter contest revealed no victor but the prince’s mind would not so easily rest. He ordered the 6 kinds of weapon to change into trillions, aiming for the head. The King roared with laughter loud and wielded his iron rod with artful ease, undaunted: 1 turned to 1000, 1000 to 10000, filling the sky as a swarm of dancing dragons, and shocked the Monster Kings of sundry caves into shutting their doors. Demons and monsters all over the mountain hid their heads. The angry breath of divine soldiers was like oppressive clouds. The golden-hooped iron rod whizzed like the wind. On this side, the battle cries of celestial fighters appalled everyone; on that side, the banner-waving of monsters startled each person. Growing fierce, the 2 parties both willed a test of strength. We know not who was stronger and who weaker.* Each displaying his divine powers, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Prince and Wukong battled for 30 rounds. The 6 weapons of that prince changed into 1000 and 10000 pieces; the golden-hooped rod of Sun Wukong into 10000 and 1000. They clashed like raindrops and meteors in the air but victory or defeat was not yet determined. Wukong however, proved to be the one swifter of eye and hand. Right in the midst of the confusion, he plucked a piece of hair and shouted, “Change!”

It changed into a copy of him, also wielding a rod in its hands and deceiving Naṭa. His real person leaped behind Naṭa and struck his left shoulder with the rod. Naṭa, still performing his magic, heard the rod whizzing through the air and tried desperately to dodge it. Unable to move quickly enough, he took the blow and fled in pain. Breaking off his magic and gathering up his 6 weapons, he returned to his camp in defeat. Standing in front of his battle line, Deity-King Li saw what was happening and was about to go to his son’s assistance. The prince however, came to him first and gasped, “Dad King! The Ban-Horse Plague’s truly powerful. Even your son of such magical strength’s no match for him! He’s wounded me in the shoulder.”

“If this fellow’s so powerful,” said the Deity-King, turning pale with fright, “how can we beat him?”

The prince said, “In front of his cave he’s set up a banner bearing the words: *The Great Sage Equal to Heaven*. By his own mouth he boastfully asserted that if the Jade Emperor appointed him to such a title, all troubles would cease. If he weren’t given this name, he’d surely fight his way up to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists!”

“If that’s the case,” said the Deity-King, “let’s not fight with him for the moment. Let’s return to the region above and report these words. There’ll be time then for us to send for more celestial soldiers and take this fellow on all sides.”

The prince was in such pain that he could not do battle again; he therefore went back to Heaven with the Deity-King to report, of which we speak no further. Look at that King returning to his mountain in triumph! The monster kings of 72 caves and the 6 sworn brothers all came to congratulate him, and they feasted jubilantly in the blessed cave dwelling. He then said to the 6 brothers, “If little brother is now called the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, why don’t all of you assume the title of Great Sage also?”

“Our worthy brother’s words are right!” shouted the Bull Monster King from their midst, <sup>11</sup> “I’m going to be called the Great Sage Parallel with Heaven.”

“I’ll be called the Great Sage Covering the Ocean,” said the Dragon Monster King.

“I’ll be called the Great Sage United with Heaven,” said the Garuda Monster King.

“I’ll be called the Great Sage, the Mover of Mountains,” said the Giant Lynx King.

“I’ll be called the Tell-Tale Great Sage,” said the Macaque King.

“And I’ll be called a god-Routing Great Sage,” said the Orangutan King.

At that moment, the 7 Great Sages had complete freedom to do as they pleased and to call themselves whatever titles they liked. They had fun for a whole day and then dispersed. Now we return to the Deity-King Li and the Third Prince who went straight to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists to give this report, leading the other commanders: “By your holy decree your subjects led the expeditionary force down to the Region Below to subdue the baneful mortal, Sun Wukong. We’d no idea of his enormous power and we’d not prevail against him. We beseech Your Majesty to give us reinforcements to wipe him out.”

“How powerful can we expect one baneful human to be,” asked the Jade Emperor, “that reinforcements are needed?”

“May Your Majesty pardon us from an offence worthy of death!” said the prince, drawing closer. “That baneful human wielded an iron rod; he defeated first the Mighty-Spirit God and then wounded the shoulder of your subject. Outside the door of his cave he set up a banner bearing the words: *The Great Sage Equal to Heaven*. He said that if he were given such a rank, he would lay down his arms and come to declare his allegiance. If not, he’d fight his way up to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists.”

“How dare this baneful human be so insolent!” exclaimed the Jade Emperor, astonished by what he had heard. “We must order the generals to have him executed at once!”

As he said this, the Gold Star of Venus came forward again from the ranks and said, “The baneful human knows how to make a speech but he has no idea what’s appropriate and what isn’t. Even if reinforcements are sent to fight him, I don’t think he can be subdued right away without taxing our forces. It’d be better if Your Majesty were greatly to extend your mercy and proclaim yet another decree of pacification. Let him indeed be made the Great Sage Equal to Heaven; he’ll be given an empty title, rank without compensation in short.”

“What do you mean by rank without compensation?” said the Jade Emperor.

The Gold Star said, “His name will be Great Sage Equal to Heaven but he’ll not be given any official duty or salary. We’ll keep him here in Heaven so that we may put his perverse mind at rest, make him desist from his madness, and arrogance. The universe will then be calm and the oceans tranquil again.”

Hearing these words, the Jade Emperor said, “We’ll follow the counsels of our minister.”

He ordered the mandate to be made up and the Gold Star to bear it hence. The Gold Star left through the South Heaven Gate once again and headed straight for the Flower-Fruit Mountain. Outside the Water-Curtain Cave things were quite different from the way they had been the previous time. He found the entire region filled with the awesome and bellicose presence of every conceivable kind of monster, each one of them clutching swords and spears, wielding scimitars and staffs. Growling and leaping about, they began to attack the Gold Star the moment they saw him. “You, chieftains, hear me,” said the Gold Star, “let me trouble you to report this to Great Sage. I’m the Heavenly messenger sent by the Lord above and bear an imperial decree of invitation.”

The various monsters ran inside to report, “There’s an old man outside who says that he is a Heavenly messenger from the region above, bearing a decree of invitation for you.”

“Welcome! Welcome!” said Wukong. “He must be that Gold Star of Venus who came here last time. Although it’s a shabby position they gave me when he invited me up to the region above, I nevertheless made it to Heaven once and familiarised myself with the ins and outs of the celestial passages. He’s come again this time undoubtedly with good intentions.” He commanded the various chieftains to wave the banners and beat the drums, and to draw up the troops in receiving order. Leading the rest of the humans, the Great Sage donned his cap and his cuirass, over which he tossed the red and yellow robe, and slipped on the cloud shoes. He ran to the mouth of the cave, saluted courteously, and said in a loud voice, “Please come in, Old Star! Forgive me for not coming out to meet you.”

The Gold Star strode forward and entered the cave. He stood facing south and declared, “Now I inform the Great Sage. Because the Great Sage’s objected to the meanness of his previous appointment and removed himself from the imperial stables, the officials of that department, both great and small reported the matter to the Jade Emperor. The proclamation of the Jade Emperor said at first: *All appointed officials advance from lowly positions to exalted ones. Why’d he object to that arrangement?* This led to the campaign against you by Deity-King Li and Naṭa. They were ignorant of the Great Sage’s power and therefore suffered defeat. They reported back to Heaven that you had set up a banner that made known your desire to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. The various martial officials still wanted to deny your request. It’s this old man who pleaded the case of the Great Sage, risking offence so that he might be invited to receive a new appointment and without the use of force. The Jade Emperor accepted my suggestion; hence I’m here to invite you.”

“I caused you trouble last time,” said Wukong, laughing, “and now I’m again indebted to you for your kindness. Thank you! Thank you! But there’s really such a rank as the Great Sage Equal to Heaven up there?”

“I made certain that this title’s approved,” said the Gold Star, “before I dared come with the decree. If there’s any mishap, let this old man be held responsible.” Wukong was highly pleased but the Gold Star refused his earnest invitation to stay for a banquet. He therefore mounted the hallowed cloud with the Gold Star and went to the South Heaven Gate where they were welcomed by the celestial generals and guardians with hands folded at their breasts. Going straight into the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists, the Gold Star saluted himself and memorialised, “Your subject’s summoned here Ban-Horse Plague Sun Wukong by your decree.”

“Have that Sun Wukong come forward,” said the Jade Emperor. “I now proclaim you to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven and a position of the highest rank. But you must indulge no more in your preposterous behaviour.”

Saluting deeply, the human uttered a great whoop of thanks. The Jade Emperor then ordered 2 building officials, Zhang and Lu to erect the official residence of the Great Sage Equal to Heaven to the right of the Garden of Mortal Peaches. Inside the mansion, 2 departments were established named *Peace & Quiet* and *Serene Spirit*, both of which were full of attending officials. The Jade Emperor also ordered the Star Spirits of 5 Poles<sup>12</sup> to accompany Wukong to assume his post. In addition, 2 bottles of imperial juice and 10 clusters of golden flowers were bestowed on him with the order that he must keep himself under control and make up his mind to indulge no more in preposterous behaviour. The King obediently accepted the command and went that day with the Star Spirits to assume his post. He opened the bottles of juice and drank them all with his colleagues. After seeing the Star Spirits off to their own palaces, he settled down in complete contentment and delight to enjoy the pleasures of Heaven without the slightest worry or care. Truly *his name divine, forever recorded in the Long-Life Book and kept from falling into samsara will long be known*.

## 005

### Disrupting the Peach Festival, the Great Sage steals elixir; many gods would seize the fiend with revolt in Heaven

The Great Sage was a monster after all; in truth he had no knowledge of his title or rank, nor did he care for the size of his salary. He did nothing but place his name on the Register. At his official residence he was cared for night and day by the attending officials of the 2 departments. His sole concern was to eat 3 meals a day and sleep soundly at night. Having neither duties nor worries, he was free and content to tour the mansions, meet friends, make new acquaintances, and form new alliances at his leisure. When he met the 3 Pure Ones, <sup>1</sup>he addressed them as “Your Reverence”; and when he ran into the 4 Thearchs, <sup>2</sup>he would say, “Your Majesty.” As for the 9 Luminaries, <sup>3</sup>the Generals of the 5 Quarters, the 28 Constellations, <sup>4</sup>the 4 Deity-Kings, <sup>5</sup>the 12 Horary Branches, <sup>6</sup>the 5 Elders of the 5 Regions, <sup>7</sup>the Star Spirits of the entire Heaven, and the numerous gods of the Milky Way, <sup>8</sup>he called them all brother and treated them in a fraternal manner. Today he toured the east and tomorrow he wandered west. Going and coming on the clouds, he had no specific itinerary. Early one morning when the Jade Emperor was holding court, the Daoist mortal Xu Jingyang<sup>9</sup> stepped from the ranks and went forward to memorialise, saluting, “The Great Sage Equal to Heaven’s no duties at present and merely dawdles away his time. He’s become quite chummy with the various Stars, Constellations of Heaven, calling them his friends regardless of whether they’re his superiors or subordinates, and I fear that his idleness may lead to roguery. It’d be better to give him some assignment so that he will not grow mischievous.”

When the Jade Emperor heard these words, he sent for the King at once who came amiably. “Your Majesty,” he said, “what promotion or reward did you’ve in mind for old man when you called him?”

“We perceive,” said the Jade Emperor, “that your life is quite indolent, since you’ve nothing to do, and we’ve decided therefore to give you an assignment. You’ll temporarily take care of the Garden of Mortal Peaches. Be careful and diligent, morning and evening.”

Delighted, the Great Sage saluted deeply and grunted his gratitude as he withdrew. He could not restrain himself from rushing immediately into the Garden of Mortal Peaches to inspect the place. A local spirit from the garden stopped him and asked, “Where’s the Great Sage going?”

“I’ve been authorised by the Jade Emperor,” said the Great Sage, “to look after the Garden of Mortal Peaches. I’ve come to conduct an inspection.” The local spirit hurriedly saluted him and then called together all the stewards in charge of hoeing, watering, tending peaches, and cleaning and sweeping. They all came to salute to the Great Sage and led him inside. There he saw *radiantly young, lovely on every trunk and limb – radiantly young, lovely blossoms filling the trees, fruits on every trunk, and limb weighing down the stems. The fruits, weighing down the stems, hang like balls of gilt: the blossoms, filling the trees, form tufts of rouge. Ever they bloom, and ever fruit-bearing, they ripen in a millennium; not knowing winter or summer, they lengthen out to 10 millennium. Those that first ripen glow like faces reddened with juice while those half-grown ones are stalk-held and green-skinned. Encased in smoke their flesh retains their green but sunlight reveals their cinnabar grace. Beneath the trees are rare flowers and exotic grass that colours, unfading in four seasons, remain the same. The towers, the terraces, the studios left, and right rise so high into the air that often cloud covers are seen. Not planted by the vulgar or the worldly of the Dark City, they are grown and tended by the Queen Mum of the Jade Pool.* <sup>10</sup>The Great Sage enjoyed this sight for a long time and then asked the local spirit, “How many trees are there?”

"There're thirty-six hundred," said the local spirit. "In the front are twelve hundred trees with little flowers and small fruits. These ripen once every three millennia, and after one taste of them a man will become a mortal enlightened in the Way with healthy limbs and a lightweight body. In the middle are twelve hundred trees of layered flowers and sweet fruits. They ripen once every six millennia. If a man eats them, he will ascend to Heaven with the mist and never grow old. At the back are twelve hundred trees with fruits of purple veins and pale yellow pits. These ripen once every nine millennia and if eaten, will make a man's age equal to that of Heaven and Earth, the sun and the moon."

Highly pleased by these words, the Great Sage that very day made thorough inspection of the trees and a listing of the arbours and pavilions before returning to his residence. From then on, he would go there to enjoy the scenery once every 3 or 4 days. He no longer consorted with his friends and took no more trips. One day he saw that more than half of the peaches on the branches of the older trees had ripened, wanted very much to eat one, and sample its novel taste. However, the stewards and the divine attendants of the Equal to Heaven Residence closely followed by the local spirit of the garden, he found it inconvenient to do so. He therefore devised a plan on the spur of the moment and said to them, "Why don't you all wait for me outside and let me rest a while in this arbour?"

The various mortals withdrew accordingly. That King then took off his cap and robe and climbed up onto a big tree. He selected the large peaches that were thoroughly ripened and ate to his heart's content right on the branches, plucking many of them. Only after he had his fill did he jump down from the tree. Pinning back his cap and donning his robe, he called for his train of followers to return to the residence. After two or three days, he used the same device to steal peaches to gratify himself once again. One day the Lady Queen Mum decided to open wide her treasure chamber and to give a banquet for the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches that was to be held in the Palace of the Jasper Pool. She ordered the various Mortal Maidens – Red Gown, Blue Gown, White Gown, Black Gown, Purple Gown, Yellow Gown, and Green Gown – to go with their flower baskets to the Garden of Mortal Peaches and pick the fruits for the festival. The seven maidens went to the gate of the garden and found it guarded by the local spirit, the stewards, and the ministers from the 2 departments of the Equal to Heaven Residence. The girls approached them, saying, "We've been ordered by the Queen Mum to pick some peaches for our banquet."

"Divine maidens," said the local spirit, "please wait a moment. This year isn't quite the same as last year. The Jade Emperor has put in charge here the Great Sage Equal to Heaven and we must report to him before we're allowed to open the gate."

"Where is the Great Sage?" asked the maidens.

"He is in the garden," said the local spirit. "Because he is tired, he is sleeping alone in the arbour."

"If that's the case," said the maidens, "let us go and find him, for we can't be late." The local spirit went into the garden with them; they found their way to the arbour but saw no one. Only the cap and the robe were left in the arbour but there was no person to be seen. The Great Sage had played for a while and eaten a number of peaches. He had then changed himself into a figure only two inches high and, perching on the branch of a large tree, had fallen asleep under the cover of thick leaves. "Since we came by imperial decree," said the 7-Gown Mortal Maidens, "how can we return empty-handed even though we can't locate the Great Sage?"

One of the divine officials said from the side, "Since the divine maidens have come by decree, they'd wait no longer. Great Sage's a habit of wandering off somewhere and he must've left the garden to meet his friends. Go and pick your peaches now and we'll report the matter for you."

The Mortal Maidens followed his suggestion and went into the grove to pick their peaches. They gathered 2 basketfuls from the trees in front and filled 3 more baskets from the trees in the middle. When they went to the trees at the back of the grove, they found that the flowers were sparse and the fruits scanty. Only a few peaches with hairy stems and green skins were left for the fact is that the King had eaten all the ripe ones. Looking this way and that the 7 Mortal Maidens found on a branch pointing southward 1 single peach that was half white and half red. The Blue Gown Maiden pulled the branch down with her hand and the Red Gown Maiden after plucking the fruit, let the branch snap back up into its position. This was the very branch on which the transformed Great Sage was sleeping. Started by her, the Great Sage revealed his true form and whipped out from his ear the golden-hooped rod. 1 wave and it had the thickness of a rice bowl. "From what region you've come, monsters," he cried, "that you've the gall to steal my peaches?"

Terrified, the 7 Mortal Maidens knelt down together and pleaded, "Let the Great Sage calm himself! We're not monsters but the Seven-Gown Mortal Maidens sent by the Lady Queen Mum to pluck the fruits needed for the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches when the treasure chamber's opened wide. We just came here and first saw the local spirit of the garden who/d not find the Great Sage. Fearing that we might be delayed in fulfilling the command of the Queen Mum, we didn't wait for the Great Sage but proceeded to pluck the peaches. We beg you to forgive us."

When the Great Sage heard these words, his anger changed to delight. "Please arise, divine maidens," he said. "Who's invited to the banquet when the Queen Mum opens wide her treasure chamber?"

"The last festival had its own set of rules," said the Mortal Maidens, "and those invited were: a god, the Nuns, the holy monks, and the *Arhats* of the Western Heaven; Kuan-yin from the South Pole; the Holy Emperor of Great Mercy of the East; the Mortals of Ten Continents and Three Islands; the Dark Spirit of the North Pole; the Great Mortal of the Yellow Horn from the Imperial Centre. These're the Elders from the Five Quarters. In addition, there're the Star Spirits of the Five Poles, the Three Pure Ones, the four demigod Kings, the Heavenly demigod of the Great Monad, and the rest from the Upper Eight Caves. From the Middle Eight Caves there were the Jade Emperor, the Nine Heroes, the Mortals of the Seas and Mountains; from the Lower Eight Caves, there're the Pope of Darkness and the Terrestrial Mortals. The gods and deities both great and small of every palace and mansion will be attending this happy Festival of the Mortal Peaches."

"Am I invited?" asked the Great Sage, laughing.

"We've not heard your name mentioned," said the Mortal Maidens.

"I'm the Great Sage Equal to Heaven," said the Great Sage. "Why'd I not be made an honoured guest at the party?"

"Well, we told you the rule for the last festival," said the Mortal Maidens, "but we don't know what will happen this time."

"You're right," said the Great Sage, "and I don't blame you. You all just stand here and let old man go and do a little detection to find out whether he's invited or not." Dear Great Sage! He made a magic sign and recited a spell, saying to the various Mortal Maidens, "Stay! Stay! Stay!"

This was the magic of immobilization, the effect of which was that the Seven-Gown Mortal Maidens all stood wide-eyed and transfixed beneath the peach trees. Leaping out of the garden, the Great Sage mounted his hallowed cloud and headed straight for the Jasper Pool. As he journeyed, he saw over there *a sky-full of holy mist with sparkling light, and 5-coloured clouds passing ceaselessly.*

*<sup>11</sup>The cries of white cranes pierced the 9-fold Heaven; purple fungi bloomed through 1000 leaves. Right in this midst a mortal appeared with a natural, fair face and manner distinct. His spirit glowed like a dancing rainbow; a list of no birth or death hung from his waist. His name, the Great Mortal of Naked Feet: <sup>12</sup>attending the Peaches Feast he'd lengthen his age.* That Great Mortal of Naked Feet ran right into the Great Sage who was just devising a plan to deceive the real mortal, he saluted. Since he wanted to go in secret to the festival, he asked, "Where's the Venerable Wisdom going?"

The Great Mortal said, "On the kind invitation of the Queen Mum, I'm going to the happy Festival of Mortal Peaches."

"The Venerable Wisdom's not yet learned of what I'm about to say," said the Great Sage. "Because of the speed of my cloud somersault, the Jade Emperor has sent old man out to all five thoroughfares to invite people to go first to the Hall of Perfect Light for a rehearsal of ceremonies before attending the banquet."

Being a sincere and honest man, the Great Mortal took the lie for the truth though he protested, "In years past we rehearsed right at the Jasper Pool and expressed our gratitude there. Why do we've to go to the Hall of Perfect Light for rehearsal this time before attending the banquet?"

Nonetheless, he had no choice but to change the direction of his hallowed cloud and go straight to the hall. Treading the cloud, the Great Sage recited a spell and changed into the form of the Great Mortal of Naked Feet with one shake of his body. It did not take him very long before he reached the treasure chamber. He stopped his cloud and walked softly inside. There he found *swirling waves of ambrosial fragrance, dense layers of holy mist, a jade terrace decked with ornaments, a chamber full of the life force, ethereal shapes of the phoenix soaring and the Argus rising, and undulant forms of gold blossoms with stems of jade. Set upon there were the Screen of 9 Phoenixes in Twilight, the Beacon Mound of 8 Treasures and Purple Mist, a table inlaid with 5-colour gold, and a green jade pot of 1000 flowers. On the tables were dragon livers, phoenix marrow, bear paws, and the lips of apes. <sup>13</sup>Most tempting was every one of the 100 delicacies and most succulent the hue of every kind of fruit and food.* Everything was laid out in an orderly fashion but no deity had yet arrived for the feast. Great Sage could not make an end of staring at the scene when he suddenly felt the overpowering aroma of juice. Turning his head, he saw several juice-making divine officials and grain-mashing stewards in the long corridor to the right. They were giving directions to the few Daoists charged with carrying water, the boys who took care of the fire in washing out the barrels, and scrubbing the jugs. For they had already finished making the juice, rich and mellow as the juices of jade. The Great Sage could not prevent the saliva from dripping out of the corner of his mouth and wanted to have a taste at once except that the people were all standing there. He therefore resorted to magic. Plucking a few hairs, he threw them into his mouth and chewed them to pieces before spitting them out. He recited a spell and cried "Change!" They changed into many sleep-inducing insects that landed on the people's faces. Look at them, how their hands grow weak, their heads droop, and their eyelids sink down. They dropped their activities and all fell sound asleep. The Great Sage then took some of the rare delicacies and choicest dainties and ran into the corridor. Standing beside the jars and leaning on the barrels, he abandoned himself to drinking. After feasting for a long time, he became thoroughly drunk but he turned this over in his mind, "Bad! Bad! In a little while when the invited guests arrive, won't they be indignant with me? What'll happen to me once I'm caught? I'd better go back home now and sleep it off!" Dear Great Sage! Reeling from side to side, he stumbled along solely on the strength of juice and in a moment he lost his way. It was not the Equal to Heaven Residence that he went to but the Tushita Palace. The moment he saw it, he realised his mistake. "The Tushita Palace's at the uppermost of the thirty-three Heavens," he said, "the Griefless Heaven that's the home of the Most High Laozi. How did I get here? No matter, I've always wanted to see this old man but never found the opportunity. Now that it's on my way, I might as well pay him a visit." He straightened out his attire and pushed his way in but Laozi was nowhere to be seen. In fact, there was not a trace of anyone. The fact of the matter was that Laozi, accompanied by the Aged God Diparinkara was giving a lecture on the tall, 3-storied Red Mound Elixir Platform; the various divine youths, commanders, and officials were all attending the lecture, standing on both sides of the platform Searching around, Great Sage went all the way to the alchemical room. He found no one but saw fire burning in an oven beside the hearth and around the oven were 5 gourds in which finished elixir was stored. "This thing's the greatest treasure of mortals," said the Great Sage happily. "Since old man has understood the Way and comprehended the mystery of the Internals' identity with the External, I've also wanted to produce some golden elixir on my own to benefit people. While I've been too busy at other times even to think about going home to enjoy myself, good fortune's met me at the door today and presented me with this! As long as Laozi is not around, I'll take a few tablets and try the taste of something new." He poured out the contents of all the gourds and ate them like fried beans. In a moment, the effect of the elixir had dispelled that of the juice and he again thought to himself, "Bad! Bad! I've brought on me calamity greater than Heaven! If the Jade Emperor's knowledge of this, it'll be difficult to preserve my life! Go! Go! Go! I'll go back to the Region Below to be a king." He ran out of the Tushita Palace and avoiding the former way, left by the West Heaven Gate, making himself invisible by the magic of body concealment. Lowering the direction of his cloud, he returned to the Flower-Fruit Mountain. There he was greeted by flashing banners and shining spears for the 4 mighty commanders and the monster kings of 72 caves were engaging in a military exercise. "Little ones," the Great Sage called out loudly, "I've returned!"

The monsters dropped their weapons and knelt down, saying, "Great Sage! What laxity of mind! You left us for so long and didn't even once visit us to see how we're doing."

"It's not that long!" said the Great Sage. "It's not that long!"

They walked as they talked and went deep inside the cave dwelling. After sweeping the place clean, preparing a place for him to rest, saluting, and doing homage, the 4 mighty commanders said, "The Great Sage's been living for over a century in Heaven. May we ask what appointment he actually received?"

"I recall that it's been but half a year," said the Great Sage, laughing. "How can you talk of a century?"

"One day in Heaven," said the commanders, "is equal to one year on Earth."

The Great Sage said, "I'm glad to say that the Jade Emperor this time's more favourably disposed toward me and he did indeed appoint me Great Sage Equal to Heaven. An official residence's built for me and two departments – Peace and Quiet and Serene Spirit – were established with bodyguards and attendants in each department. Later when it was found that I carried no responsibility, I was asked to take care of the Garden of Mortal Peaches. Recently the Lady Queen Mum gave the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches but she did not invite me. Without waiting for her invitation, I went first to the Jasper Pool and secretly consumed the food and water. Leaving that place, I staggered into the palace of Laozi and finished up all the elixir stored in five gourds. I was afraid that the Jade Emperor would be offended and so I decided to walk out of the Heaven Gate." The various monsters were delighted by these words and they prepared a banquet of fruits and juice to welcome him. A stone bowl was filled with coconut juice and presented to the Great Sage who took a mouthful and then exclaimed with a grimace, "It tastes awful! Just awful!"

"The Great Sage's," said Beng and Ba, the 2 commanders, "grown accustomed to tasting divine juice and food in Heaven. Small wonder that coconut juice now seems hardly delectable. But the proverb says, *Tasty or not, it's water from home!*"

"And all of you're, 'related or not, people from home!'" said the Great Sage. "When I was enjoying myself this morning at the Jasper Pool, I saw many jars and jugs in the corridor full of the juices of jade that you've never savoured. Let me go back and steal a few bottles to bring down here. Just drink half a cup, and each one of you'll live long without growing old."

The various humans could not contain their delight. The Great Sage immediately left the cave and went directly back to the Festival of Mortal Peaches with 1 somersault, again using the magic of body concealment. As he entered the doorway of the Palace of the Jasper Pool, he saw that the juice makers, the grain mashers, the water carriers, the fire tenders were still asleep, and snoring. He took 2 large bottles, 1 under each arm, and carried 2 more in his hands. Reversing the direction of his cloud, he returned to the humans in the cave. They held their own Festival of Mortal juice with each one drinking a few cups that incident we'll relate no further. The 7-Gown Mortal Maidens did not find a release from the Great Sage's magic of immobilisation until a whole day had gone by. Each one of them then took her flower basket and reported to the Queen Mum, saying, "We're delayed because the Great Sage Equal to Heaven imprisoned us with his magic."

"How many baskets of mortal peaches have you gathered?" asked the Queen Mum.

“Only two baskets of small peaches and three of medium-sized peaches,” said the Mortal Maidens, “for when we went to the back of the grove, there’s not even half a large one left! We think the Great Sage must’ve eaten them all. As we went looking for him, he unexpectedly made his appearance and threatened us with violence and beating. He also questioned us about who’d been invited to the banquet and we gave him a thorough account of the last festival. It’s then that he bound us with a spell and we didn’t know where he went. It’s only a moment ago that we found release and so could come back here.”

When the Queen Mum heard these words, she went immediately to the Jade Emperor and presented him with a full account of what had taken place. Before she finished speaking, the group of juice makers together with the various divine officials also came to report: “Someone unknown to us has vandalised the Festival of Mortal Peaches. The juice of jade, the eight dainties, and the hundred delicacies have all been stolen or eaten up.”

4 royal preceptors then came up to announce, “The Supreme Patriarch of Dao’s arrived.”

The Jade Emperor went out with the Queen Mum to greet him. Having paid his respects to them, Laozi said, “There’re some finished Golden Elixir of Nine Turns<sup>14</sup> in the house of this old Daoist that’re reserved for the use of Your Majesty during the next Grand Festival of Cinnabar. Strange to say, they’ve been stolen by some thief and I’ve come specifically to make this known to Your Majesty.”

This report stunned the Jade Emperor. Presently the officials from the Equal to Heaven Residence came to announce, saluting, “The Great Sage Sun’s not been discharging his duties of late. He went out yesterday and still hasn’t yet returned. Moreover, we don’t know where he went.”

These words gave the Jade Emperor added anxiety. Next came the Great Mortal of Naked Feet who saluted himself and said, “Yesterday in response to the Queen Mum’s invitation, your subject’s on his way to attend the festival when he met by chance the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. The Sage said to your subject that Your Majesty had ordered him to send your subject first to the Hall of Perfect Light for a rehearsal of ceremonies before attending the banquet. Your subject followed his direction and duly went to the hall. But I didn’t see the dragon chariot, the phoenix carriage of Your Majesty, and therefore hastened to come here to wait upon you.”

More astounded than ever, the Jade Emperor said, “This fellow now falsifies imperial decrees and deceives my worthy ministers! Let the Divine Minister of Detection quickly locate his whereabouts!” The minister received his order and left the palace to make a thorough investigation. He returned presently to report after obtaining all the details, “The person who’s so profoundly disturbed Heaven’s none other than the Great Sage Equal to Heaven.” He then gave a repeated account of all the previous incidents, and the Jade Emperor was furious. He at once commanded the 4 Great Deity-Kings to assist Deity-King Li and Prince Nata. Together they called up the 28 Constellations, the 9 Luminaries, the 12 Horary Branches, the Fearless Guards of 5 Quarters, <sup>15</sup>the 4 Temporal Guardians, <sup>16</sup>the Stars of East and West, the gods of North and South, the Deities of the 5 Mountains and the 4 Rivers, <sup>17</sup>the Star Spirits of the entire Heaven, and 100000 celestial soldiers. They were ordered to set up 18 sets of cosmic net, journey to the Region Below, encircle completely the Flower-Fruit Mountain, and capture the rogue and bring him to justice. All the deities immediately alerted their troops and departed from the Heavenly Palace. As they left, this was the spectacle of the expedition: *yellow with dust; the churning wind concealed the darkening sky: reddish with clay, the rising fog overlaid the dusky world. Because an impish human insulted the Highest Lord, the saints of all Heaven descended to this mortal Earth. Those 4 Great Deity-Kings, Fearless Guards of 5 Quarters – 4 Great demigod Kings made up the main command; Fearless Guards of 5 Quarters moved countless troops. Li, the Pagoda Bearer gave orders from the army’s centre with the fierce Nata as the captain of his vanguard forces. The Star of Rahu made the roll call at the fore-front; the Star of Ketu, noble and tall, brought up the rear: Sōma, the moon, displayed a spirit most eager; Āditya, the sun, was all shining and radiant. Heroes of special talents were the Stars of 5 Phases. The 9 Luminaries most relished a good battle. The Horary Branches of Zi, Wu, Mao, and Yao – they were all celestial guardians of titanic strength. To the east and west, the 5 Plagues<sup>18</sup> and the 5 Mountains! To the left and right, the 6 Gods of Darkness and the 6 Gods of Light! Above and below, the Dragon Gods of the 4 Rivers! And in tightest formation, the 28 Constellations!* <sup>19</sup>Citrā, Svātī, Viśākhā, and Anurādhā were the captains. Revatī, Āsvinī, Apabharaṇī, and Kṛtikā knew combat well. Uttara-Aśādhā, Abhijit, Śravaṇā, Śraviṣṭha, East–Proṣṭhapada, Uttara-Proṣṭhapada, Rohiṇī, Mūlabarhaṇī, East–Aśādhā – everyone an able star! Punarvasu, Tīṣya, Aśleṣā, Meghā, East–Phalgunī, Uttara-Phalgunī, and Hastā – all brandished swords and spears to show their power. Stopping the cloud and lowering the mist they came to this mortal world and pitched their tents before the Mountain of Flower and Fruit. The poem says:

*The Heaven-born King who can change a lot steals juice and elixir to joy in his mountain lair.*

*Since he spoiled the Feast of the Mortal Peach, 100000 Heaven troops spread the net of God.*

Deity-King Li now gave the order for the celestial soldiers to pitch their tents, and a cordon was drawn so tightly around the Flower-Fruit Mountain that not even water could escape! Moreover, eighteen sets of cosmic net were spread out above and below the region, and the Nine Luminaries were then ordered to go into battle. They led their troops and advanced to the cave in front of which they found a troop of humans both old and young, prancing about playfully. “Little monsters over there,” cried one of the Star Spirits in a severe voice, “where’s yGreat Sage? We’re Heavenly deities sent here from the Region Above to subdue your rebellious Great Sage. Tell him to come here quickly and surrender. If he but utters half a *no*, all of you’ll be executed.”

Hastily the little monsters reported inside, “Great Sage, disaster! Disaster! Outside there’re nine savage deities who claim that they’re sent from the Region Above to subdue the Great Sage.”

Great Sage was just sharing the Heavenly juice with the 4 mighty commanders and the monster kings of seventy-two caves. Hearing this announcement, he said in a most nonchalant manner, “*If you’ve juice today, drink today; mind not the troubles in front of your door!*”

Scarcely had he uttered this proverb when another group ofimps came leaping and said, “Those nine savage gods are trying to provoke battle with foul words and nasty language.”

“Don’t listen to them,” said the Great Sage, laughing. “*Let’s seek today’s pleasure in poetry, juice, and cease asking when we may achieve glory or fame.*”

Hardly had he finished speaking when still another flock ofimps arrived to report, “Dad, those nine savage gods have broken down the door and are about to fight their way in!”

“These reckless, witless gods!” said the Great Sage angrily. “They really have no manners! I was not about to quarrel with them. Why are they abusing me to my face?” He gave the order for the 1-Horn Demon King to lead the monster kings of 72 caves to battle, adding that old man and the 4 mighty commanders would follow in the rear. The Demon King swiftly led his troops of ogres to go out to fight but they were ambushed by the 9 Luminaries and pinned down right at the head of the sheet iron bridge. At the height of the melee, the Great Sage arrived. “Make way!” he yelled, whipping out his iron rod.

1 wave of it and it was as thick as a rice bowl and about 12 feet long. The Great Sage plunged into battle and none of the 9 Luminaries dared oppose him. In a moment, they were all beaten back. When they regrouped themselves again in battle formation, the 9 Luminaries stood still and said, “You senseless Ban-Horse Plague! You’re guilty of the ten evils. <sup>20</sup>You first stole peaches and then juice utterly disrupting the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches. You also robbed Laozi of his mortal elixir and then had the gall to plunder the imperial garden for your personal enjoyment. Don’t you realise that you’ve piled up sin upon sin?”

“Indeed,” said the Great Sage, “these several incidents did occur! But what do you intend to do now?”

The 9 Luminaries said, “We received the golden decree of the Jade Emperor to lead our troops here to subdue you. Submit at once and spare these creatures from being slaughtered. If not, we’ll level this mountain and overturn this cave!”

“How great is your magical power, silly gods,” retorted the Great Sage angrily, “that you dare to mouth such foolhardy words? Don’t go away! Have a taste of old man’s rod!”

The 9 Luminaries mounted a joint attack but the Handsome King was not in the least intimidated. He wielded his golden-hooped rod, parrying left and right, and fought the 9 Luminaries until they were thoroughly exhausted. Every one of them turned around and fled, his weapons trailing behind him. Running into the tent at the centre of their army, they said to the Pagoda-Bearer Deity-King, “That King is indeed an intrepid warrior! We can’t withstand him and have returned defeated.”

Deity-King Li then ordered the 4 Great Deity-Kings and the 28 Constellations to go out together to do battle. Without displaying the slightest panic, the Great Sage also ordered the 1-Horn Demon King, the monster kings of 72 caves, and the 4 mighty commanders to range themselves in battle formation in front of the cave. Look at this all-out battle! It was truly terrifying with *the cold, souging wind, the dark, dreadful fog. The colourful banners fluttered on 1 side; lances and halberds glimmered on the other. There were row upon row of shining helmets and coat upon coat of gleaming armour. Row upon row of helmets shining in the sunlight resembled silver bells whose chimes echoed in the sky; coat upon coat of gleaming armour rising cliff-like in layers seemed like glaciers crushing the earth. The giant scimitars flew and flashed like lightning; the mulberry-white spears could pierce even mist and cloud! The cross-like halberds and tiger-eye lashes were arranged like thick rows of hemp; the green swords of bronze and 4-sided shovels crowded together like trees in a dense forest. Curved bows, crossbows, and stout arrows with eagle plumes, short staffs and snakelike lances – all could kill or maim. That compliant rod that the Great Sage owned kept tossing and turning in this battle with gods. They fought till the air was rid of birds flying by; wolves and tigers were driven from within the mount; the planet was darkened by hurtling rocks and stones, and the cosmos bedimmed by flying dust and dirt. The clamour and clangour disturbed Heaven and Earth; the scrap and scuffle alarmed both demons and gods.* Beginning with the battle formation at dawn, they fought until the sun sank down behind the western hills. The 1-Horn Demon King and the monster kings of 72 caves were all taken captive by the forces of Heaven. Those who escaped were the 4 mighty commanders and the troop of humans who hid themselves deep inside the Water-Curtain Cave. With his single rod, the Great Sage withstood in mid-air the 4 Great Deity-Kings, Li the Pagoda Bearer, and Prince Nata, and battled with them for a long time. When he saw that evening was approaching, the Great Sage plucked a handful of hairs, threw them into his mouth, and chewed them to pieces. He spat them out, crying, “Change!” They changed at once into many thousands of Great Sages, each employing a golden-hooped rod! They beat back Prince Nata and defeated the 5 Deity-Kings. In triumph the Great Sage collected back his hairs and hurried back to his cave. Soon, at the head of the sheet iron bridge, he was met by the four mighty commanders leading the rest of the humans. As they saluted to receive him they cried three times, sobbing aloud, and then they laughed 3 times, heehee-ing and ho-ho-ing. The Great Sage said, “Why do you all laugh and cry when you see me?”

“When we fought with the demigod Kings this morning,” said the 4 mighty commanders, “the monster kings of seventy-two caves and the One-Horn Demon King were all taken captive by the gods. We’re the only ones who managed to escape alive and that’s why we cried. Now we see that the Great Sage’s returned unharmed, triumphant, and so we laugh as well.”

“Victory and defeat,” said the Great Sage, “are the common experiences of a soldier. The ancient proverb says, *you may kill ten thousand of your enemies but you’ll lose three thousand of your allies!* Moreover, those chieftains who have been captured are tigers, leopards, wolves, insects, badgers, foxes, and the like. Not a single member of our own kind has been hurt. Why then should we be disconsolate? Although our adversaries have been beaten back by my magic of body division, they’re still encamped at the foot of our mountain. Let’s be most vigilant therefore in our defence. Have a good meal, rest well, and conserve your energy. When morning comes, watch me perform a great magic and capture some of these generals from Heaven so that our comrades may be avenged.” The 4 mighty commanders drank a few bowls of coconut juice with the host of humans and went to sleep peacefully. When those 4 Deity-Kings retired their troops and stopped their fighting, each 1 of the Heavenly commanders came to report his accomplishment. There were those who had captured lions and elephants and those who had apprehended wolves, crawling creatures, and foxes. Not a single monster however, had been seized. The camp was then secured, a great tent was pitched, and those commanders with meritorious services were rewarded. The soldiers in charge of the cosmic nets were ordered to carry bells and were given passwords. They encircled the Flower-Fruit Mountain to await the great battle of the next day and each soldier everywhere diligently kept his watch. So this is the situation: *the fiendish human riots through Heaven and Earth but the net spreads open, ready night and day.*

## 006

### Guanyin inquiries into the cause, attending the banquet; the Little Sage subdues the Great Sage, exerting his power

The Great Compassionate Deliverer, the Efficacious Nun Guanyin from the Potalaka Mountain of the South Sea<sup>1</sup> invited by the Lady Queen Mum to attend the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches, she arrived at the treasure chamber of the Jasper Pool with her senior disciple, Hui’an. There they found the whole place desolate and the banquet tables in utter disarray. Although several members of the Heavenly pantheon were present, none was seated. Instead they were all engaged in vigorous exchanges and discussions. After the Nun had greeted the various deities, they told her what had occurred. “Since there’ll be no festival,” said the Nun, “nor any raising of cups, all of you might as well come with this humble cleric to see the Jade Emperor.” The gods followed her gladly and they went to the entrance to the Hall of Perfect Light. There the Nun was met by the 4 Celestial Masters and the Mortal of Naked Feet who recounted how the celestial soldiers, ordered by an enraged Jade Emperor to capture the monster, had not yet returned. The Nun said, “I’d like to have an audience with the Jade Emperor. May I trouble one of you to announce my arrival?”

The Heavenly Preceptor Qiu Hongji went at once into the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists and having made his report, invited Guanyin to enter. Laozi then took the upper seat with the Emperor while the Lady Queen Mum was in attendance behind the throne. The Nun led the crowd inside. After paying homage to the Jade Emperor, they also saluted Laozi and the Queen Mum. When each of them was seated, she asked, “How’s the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches?”

“Every year when the festival’s been given,” said the Jade Emperor, “we’ve thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. This year it’s been completely ruined by a baneful human, leaving us with nothing but an invitation to disappointment.”

“Where did this baneful human come from?” asked the Nun.

“He’s born of a stone egg on top of the Flower-Fruit Mountain of the Aolai Country of the East East-Videha Continent,” said the Jade Emperor. “At the moment of his birth, two beams of golden light flashed immediately from his eyes, reaching as far as the Palace of the Polestar. We didn’t think much of that but he later became a monster, subduing the Dragon and taming the Tiger as well as eradicating his name from the Register of Death. When the Dragon Kings and the Kings of the Underworld brought the matter to our attention, we wanted to capture him. The Star of Long Life however,



observed that all the beings of the three regions that possessed the nine apertures could attain mortality. We therefore decided to educate and nurture the talented human and summoned him to the Region Above. He was appointed to the post of Bimawen at the imperial stables but, taking offence at the lowliness of his position, he left Heaven in rebellion. We then sent Deity-King Li and Prince Naṭa to ask for his submission by proclaiming a decree of pacification. He was brought again to the Region Above and was appointed the Great Sage Equal to Heaven – a rank without compensation. Since he had nothing to do but to wander east and west, we feared that he might cause further trouble. So he was asked to look after the Garden of Mortal Peaches. But he broke the law and ate all the large peaches from the oldest trees. By then, the banquet was about to be given. As a person without salary he was, of course, not invited; nonetheless, he plotted to deceive the Mortal of Naked Feet and managed to sneak into the banquet by assuming the Mortal’s appearance. He finished off all the divine juice and food, after which he also stole Laozi’s elixir and took away a considerable quantity of imperial juice for the enjoyment of his mountain humans. Our mind has been sorely vexed by this, and we therefore sent a hundred thousand celestial soldiers with cosmic nets to capture him. We’ve not yet received today’s report on how the battle is faring.”

When the Nun heard this, she said to Disciple Hui’an, “You must leave Heaven at once, go down to the Flower-Fruit Mountain, and inquire into the military situation. If the enemy is engaged, you can lend your assistance; in any event, you must bring back a factual report.”

The Disciple Hui’an straightened out his attire and mounted the cloud to leave the palace, an iron rod in his hand. When he arrived at the mountain, he found layers of cosmic net drawn tightly and sentries at every gate holding bells and shouting passwords. The encirclement of the mountain was indeed watertight! Hui’an stood still and called out, “Heavenly sentinels, may I trouble you to announce my arrival? I’m Prince Liberation, second son of Deity-King Li and also Hui’an, senior disciple of Guanyin of South Sea. I’ve come to inquire about the military situation.”

The divine soldiers of the 5 Mountains at once reported this beyond the gate. The constellations Aquarius, Pleiades, Hydra, and Scorpio then conveyed the message to the central tent. Deity-King Li issued a directorial flag that ordered the cosmic nets to be opened and entrance permitted for the visitor. Day was just dawning in the east as Hui’an followed the flag inside and saluted himself before the 4 Great Deity-Kings and Deity-King Li. After he had finished his greetings, Deity-King Li said, “My child where have you come from?”

“Your untutored son,” said Hui’an, “accompanied the Nun to attend the Festival of Mortal Peaches. Seeing that the festival was desolate and the Jasper Pool laid waste, the Nun led the various deities and your untutored son to have an audience with the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor spoke at length about Dad and King’s expedition to the Region Below to subdue the baneful human. Since no report has returned for a whole day and neither victory nor defeat has been ascertained, the Nun ordered your untutored son to come here to find out how things stand.”

“We came here yesterday to set up the encampment,” said Deity-King Li, “and the Nine Luminaries were sent to provoke battle. But this fellow made a grand display of his magical powers, and the Nine Luminaries all returned defeated. After that, I led the troops personally to confront him, and the fellow also brought his forces into formation. Our hundred thousand celestial soldiers fought with him until evening, when he retreated from the battle by using the magic of body division. When we recalled the troops and made our investigation, we found that we’d captured some wolves, crawling creatures, tigers, leopards, and the like. But we didn’t even catch half a monster! And today we’ve not yet gone into battle.”

As he was saying all this, someone came from the gate of the camp to report, “That Great Sage’s shouting for battle outside, leading his band of monsters.”

The 4 Deity-Kings, Deity-King Li, and the prince at once made plans to bring out the troops when Liberation said, “Dad King, your untutored son was told by the Nun to come down here to acquire information. She also told me to give you assistance should there be actual combat. Though I’m not very talented, I volunteer to go out now and see what kind of a Great Sage this is!”

“Child,” said the Deity-King, “since you’ve studied with the Nun for several years, you must’ve some powers, I suppose! But do be careful!”

Dear prince! Grasping the iron rod with both hands, he tightened up his embroidered garment and leaped out of the gate. “Who’s the Great Sage Equal to Heaven?” he cried.

Holding high his compliant rod, the Great Sage answered, “None other than old man here! Who’re you that you dare question me?”

“I’m Liberation, the second prince of Deity-King Li,” said Liberation. “At present I’m also the disciple of Nun Guanyin, a defender of the faith before her treasure throne. And my religious name is Hui’an.”

“Why’ve you left your religious training at South Sea and come here to see me?” said the Great Sage.

“I was sent by my master to inquire about the military situation,” said Liberation. “Seeing what a nuisance you’ve made of yourself, I’ve come specifically to capture you.”

“You dare to talk so big?” said the Great Sage. “But don’t run away! Have a taste of old man’s rod!”

Liberation was not at all frightened and met his opponent squarely with his own iron rod. The 2 of them stood before the gate of the camp at mid-mountain and what a magnificent battle they fought! *Though one rod is pitted against another, the iron’s quite different; though this weapon couples with the other, the persons are not the same. This one’s called the Great Sage, a wayward primordial god; the other is Guanyin’s disciple, a true hero and proud. The all-iron rod has been pounded 1000 times made by 6 Gods of Darkness and 6 Gods of Light. The compliant rod sets the depth of Heaven’s river, a thing divine ruling the oceans with magic might. The 2 of them in meeting have found their match; back and forth they battle in endless rounds. From this one the rod of stealthy hands, savage and fierce around the waist stabs and jabs swiftly as the wind; from the other the rod, doubling as a spear driving and relentless, lets up not a moment its parrying left and right. On this side the banners flare and flutter; on the other the war drums roll and rattle. 10000 celestial fighters circle round and round. The monsters of a whole cave stand in rows and rows. Weird fog and dark cloud spread throughout the earth. The fume and smoke of battle reach even Heaven’s Home. Yesterday’s battle was something to behold. Still more violent is the contest today. Envy the truly able King: Liberation’s beaten – he is fleeing for life!* Great Sage battled Hui’an for 50 or 60 rounds until the prince’s arms and shoulders were sore, numb, and he could fight no longer. He fled in defeat after 1 final futile swing of his weapon. The Great Sage then gathered together his human troops and stationed them securely outside the entrance of the cave. At the camp of the Deity-King, the celestial soldiers could be seen receiving the prince and making way for him to enter the gate. Panting, puffing, he ran in, gasped out to the 4 Deity-Kings, Pagoda Bearer Li, and Naṭa, “That Great Sage! What an ace! Great’s indeed his magical power! Your son cannot overcome him and has returned defeated.”

Shocked by the sight, Deity-King Li at once wrote a memorial to the Throne to request further assistance. The demon king Mahābāli and Prince Liberation were sent to Heaven to present the document. Not daring to linger, the 2 of them crashed out of the cosmic nets and mounted the holy mist and hallowed cloud. In a moment they reached the Hall of Perfect Light and met the Four Celestial Masters who led them into the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists to present their memorial. Hui’an also saluted the Nun who asked him, “What’ve you found out about the situation?”

“When I reached the Flower-Fruit Mountain by your order,” said Hui’an, “I opened the cosmic nets by my call. Seeing my dad, I told him of my master’s intentions in sending me. Dad King said, ‘We fought a battle yesterday with that King but managed to take from him only tigers, leopards, lions, elephants, and the like. We didn’t catch a single one of his monsters.’ As we’re talking, he again demanded battle. Your disciple used the iron rod to fight him for fifty or sixty rounds but I’d not prevail against him and returned to the camp defeated. Thus dad had to send the demon king Mahābāli and your pupil to come here for help.” The Nun saluted her head and pondered.

We now tell you about the Jade Emperor who opened the memorial and found a message asking for assistance. “This is rather absurd!” he said laughing. “Is this monster such a wizard that not even a hundred thousand soldiers from Heaven can vanquish him? Deity-King Li is again asking for help. What division of divine warriors can we send to assist him?” Hardly had he finished speaking when Guanyin folded her hands and said to him. “Your Majesty, let not your mind be troubled! This humble cleric will recommend a god who can capture the human.”

“Which one would you recommend?” said the Jade Emperor. “Your Majesty’s nephew,” said the Nun, “the Mortal Master of Illustrious Sagacity Erlang,<sup>2</sup> who is living at the mouth of the River of Libations in the Guan Prefecture and enjoying the incense and oblations offered to him from the Region Below. In former days he himself slew six monsters. Under his command are the Brothers of Plum Mountain and twelve hundred plant-headed deities, all possessing great magical powers. However, he will agree only to special assignments and will not obey any general summons. Your Majesty may want to send an edict transferring his troops to the scene of the battle and requesting his assistance. Our monster will surely be captured.” When the Jade Emperor heard this, he immediately issued such an edict and ordered the demon king Mahābāli to present it.

Having received the edict, the demon king mounted a cloud and went straight to the mouth of the River of Libations. It took him less than half an hour to reach the temple of the Mortal Master. Immediately the demon magistrates guarding the doors made this report inside: “There is a messenger from Heaven outside who has arrived with an edict in his hand.” Erlang and his brothers came out to receive the edict that was read before burning incense. The edict said:

*The Great Sage Equal to Heaven, a monstrous human from the Flower-Fruit Mountain’s in revolt. At the Palace he stole peaches, juice, and elixir, and disrupted the Grand Festival of Mortal Peaches. 100000 Heavenly soldiers with 18 sets of cosmic nets were dispatched to surround the mountain and capture him but victory’s not yet been secured. We therefore make this special request of our worthy nephew and his sworn brothers to go to the Flower-Fruit Mountain and assist in destroying this monster. Following your success will be lofty elevation and abundant reward.*

In great delight the Mortal Master said, “Let the messenger of Heaven go back. I’ll go at once to offer my assistance with drawn sword.”

The demon king went back to report but no further of that. This Mortal Master called together the Six Brothers of Plum Mountain: they were Kang, Zhang, Yao, and Li, the four grand marshals, and Guo Shen and Zhi Jian, the two generals. As they congregated before the court, he said to them, “The Jade Emperor just now sent us to the Flower-Fruit Mountain to capture a monstrous human. Let’s get going!” Delighted and willing, the brothers at once called out the divine soldiers under their command. With falcons mounted and dogs on leashes with arrows ready and bows drawn, they left in a violent magic wind and crossed in a moment the great Eastern Ocean. As they landed on the Flower-Fruit Mountain, they saw their way blocked by dense layers of cosmic net. “Divine commanders guarding the cosmic nets, hear us,” they shouted. “We’re specially assigned by the Jade Emperor to capture the monstrous human. Open the gate of your camp quickly and let us through.” The various deities conveyed the message to the inside, level by level. The 4 Great Deity-Kings and Deity-King Li then came out to the gate of the camp to receive them. After they had exchanged greetings, there were questions about the military situation, and the Deity-King gave them a thorough briefing. “Now that I, the Little Sage, have come,” said the Mortal Master, laughing, “he will have to engage in a contest of transformations with his adversary. You gentlemen make sure that the cosmic nets are tightly drawn on all sides but leave the top uncovered. Let me try my hand in this contest. If I lose, you gentlemen need not come to my assistance, for my own brothers will be there to support me. If I win, you gentlemen will not be needed in tying him up either; my own brothers will take care of that. All I need is the Pagoda Bearer Deity-King to stand in mid-air with his imp-reflecting mirror. If the monster should be defeated, I fear that he may try to flee to a distant locality. Make sure that his image is clearly reflected in the mirror, so that we don’t lose him.” The Deity-Kings set themselves up in the four directions while the heavenly soldiers all lined up according to their planned formations. With himself as the seventh brother, the Mortal Master led the four grand marshals and the two generals out of the camp to provoke battle. The other warriors were ordered to defend their encampment with vigilance, and the plant-headed deities were ordered to have the falcons and dogs ready for battle. The Mortal Master went to the front of the Water-Curtain Cave where he saw a troop of humans neatly positioned in an array that resembled a coiled dragon. At the centre of the array was the banner bearing the words “The Great Sage Equal to Heaven.”

“That audacious monster!” said the Mortal Master. “How dare he assume the rank *Equal to Heaven*?”

“There’s no time for praise or blame,” said the Six Brothers of Plum Mountain. “Let’s challenge him at once!” When the little humans in front of the camp saw the Mortal Master, they ran quickly to make their report. Seizing his golden-hooped rod, straightening out his golden cuirass, slipping on his cloud-treading shoes, and pressing down his red-gold cap, the King leaped out of the camp. He opened his eyes wide to stare at the Mortal Master whose features were remarkably refined and whose attire was most elegant. Truly he was a man of *features most comely and most noble mien with shoulder-reaching ears and shining eyes. His head wore the Three Mountains Phoenix cap, his body donned a pale yellow goose-down robe. Gold threaded boots matched coiling dragon socks. Eight flower-like emblems his jade belt adorned.* <sup>3</sup>*From his waist hung the crescent pellet bow. His hands held a lance of 3 points and 2 blades. Once he cleaved Peach Mountain to save his mum. His one pellet struck a tall tree’s two phoenixes. Slaying 8 fiends flung far his fame as bond brother midst Plum Mountain’s 7 Saints. His lofty mind scorned being high Heaven’s kin; his pride led him to dwell near Libations Stream. From Chi City here’s the kind heroic sage: 4*of boundless epiphanies, he’s named Erlang.

When the Great Sage saw him, he lifted high his golden-hooped rod with gales of laughter and called out, “What little warrior you’re and where do you come from that you dare present yourself here to provoke battle?”

“You must have eyes but no pupils,” shouted the Mortal Master, “if you don’t recognise me! I’m the maternal nephew of the Jade Emperor, Erlang, the King of Illustrious Grace and Spirit by imperial appointment. I’ve received my order from above to arrest you, the rebellious Bimawen human. Don’t you know that your time has come?”

“I remember,” said the Great Sage, “that the sister of the Jade Emperor some years ago became enamoured of the Region Below; she married a man by the name of Yang and had a son by him.<sup>5</sup> Are you that boy who was reputed to have cleaved open the Peach Mountain with his axe? I’d like to rebuke you roundly but I’ve no grudge against you. I can hit you with this rod of mine too but I’d like to spare your life! A little boy like you, why don’t you hurry back and ask your Four Great Deity-Kings to come out?” When the Mortal Master heard this, he grew very angry and shouted, “Reckless human! Don’t you dare be so insolent! Take a sample of my blade!” Swerving to dodge the blow, the Great Sage quickly raised his golden-hooped rod to engage his opponent. What a fine fight there was between the two of them: *Erlang, a god of Illustrious Kindness, and the Great Sage Equal to Heaven! This one, haughty and proud, defied the Handsome King. That one, not knowing his man, would crush all stalwart foes. Suddenly these 2 met and both desired a match – they had never known which the better man was; today they’d learn who’s strong and who’s weak! The iron rod seemed a flying dragon and the lance divine a dancing phoenix: left and right they struck, attacking both front and back. The Plum Mountain 6 Brothers’ awesome presence filled 1 side while the 4 generals, like Ma and Liu, took command on the other. All worked as one to wave flags and roll drums; all helped the fight by cheers while beating the gong. 2 sharp weapons sought a chance to hurt but thrusts and parries did not slack one whit. The golden-hooped rod, wonder of the sea could change and fly to snare a victory. A little lag and your life is over! A tiny error and your luck runs out!* The Mortal Master fought the Great Sage for more than three hundred rounds but the result still could not be determined. The Mortal Master, therefore, summoned all his magical powers; with a shake, he made his body a hundred thousand feet tall. Holding with both hands the divine lance of three points and two blades like the peaks that cap the flower Mountain, this green-faced, sabre-toothed figure with scarlet hair aimed a violent blow at the head of the Great Sage. But the Great Sage also exerted his magical power and changed himself into a figure having the features and height of Erlang. He wielded a

compliant golden-hooped rod that resembled the Heaven-supporting pillar on top of Mount Kunlun to oppose a god Erlang. This vision so terrified the marshals, Ma and Liu, that they could no longer wave the flags, and so appalled the generals, Beng and Ba, that they could use neither scimitar nor sword. On the side of Erlang, the Brothers Kang, Zhang, Yao, Li, Guo Shen, and Zhi Jian gave the order to the plant-headed deities to let loose the falcons and dogs and to advance upon those humans in front of the Water-Curtain Cave with mounted arrows and drawn bows. The charge, alas, *dispersed the four mighty commanders of human imps and captured 2000 or 3000 numinous fiends!* Those humans dropped their spears and abandoned their armour, forsook their swords, and threw away their lances. They scattered in all directions – running, screaming, scuttling up the mountain, or scrambling back to the cave. It was as if a cat at night had stolen upon resting birds: they darted up as stars to fill the sky. The Brothers thus gained a complete victory, of which we'll speak no further. Now we're telling you about the Mortal Master and the Great Sage who had changed themselves into forms which imitated Heaven and Earth. As they were doing battle, the Great Sage suddenly perceived that the humans of his camp were put to rout, and his heart grew faint. He changed out of his magic form, turned around, and fled dragging his rod behind him. When the Mortal Master saw that he was running away, he chased him with great strides saying, "Where're you going? Surrender now and your life will be spared!"

The Great Sage stopped no more to fight but ran as fast as he could. Near the cave's entrance, he ran right into Kang, Zhang, Yao, Li the 4 grand marshals, Guo Shen, and Zhi Jian, the 2 generals who were at the head of an army blocking his way. "Lawless human!" they cried, "Where do you think you're going?" Quivering all over, the Great Sage squeezed his golden-hooped rod back into an embroidery needle and hid it in his ear. With a shake of his body, he changed himself into a small sparrow and flew to perch on top of a tree. In great agitation, the six Brothers searched all around but could not find him. "We've lost the monster! We've lost the monster!" they all cried.

As they were making all that clamour, the Mortal Master arrived and asked, "Brothers where did you lose him in the chase?"

"We just had him boxed in here," said the gods, "but he simply vanished." Scanning the place with his phoenix eye wide open,<sup>6</sup> Erlang at once discovered that the Great Sage had changed into a small sparrow perched on a tree. He changed out of his magic form and took off his pellet bow. With a shake of his body, he changed into a sparrow hawk with outstretched wings, ready to attack its prey. When the Great Sage saw this, he darted up with a flutter of his wings; changing himself into a cormorant, he headed straight for the open sky. When Erlang saw this, he quickly shook his feathers and changed into a huge ocean crane that could penetrate the clouds to strike with its bill. The Great Sage therefore lowered his direction, changed into a small fish, and dove into a stream with a splash. Erlang rushed to the edge of the water but could see no trace of him. He thought to himself, "This simian must have gone into the water and changed himself into a fish, a shrimp, or the like. I'll change again to catch him." He duly changed into a fish hawk and skimmed downstream over the waves. After a while, the fish into which the Great Sage had changed was swimming along with the current. Suddenly he saw a bird that looked like a green kite though its feathers were not entirely green, like an egret though it had small feathers, and like an old crane though its feet were not red. "That must be the transformed Erlang waiting for me," he thought to himself. He swiftly turned around and swam away after releasing a few bubbles. When Erlang saw this, he said, "The fish that released the bubbles looks like a carp though its tail is not red, like a perch though there are no patterns on its scales, like a snake fish though there are no stars on its head, like a bream though its gills have no bristles. Why does it move away the moment it sees me? It must be the transformed human himself!" He swooped toward the fish and snapped at it with his beak. The Great Sage shot out of the water and changed at once into a water snake; he swam toward shore and wriggled into the grass along the bank. When Erlang saw that he had snapped in vain and that a snake had darted away in the water with a splash, he knew that the Great Sage had changed again. Turning around quickly, he changed into a scarlet-topped grey crane that extended its beak like sharp iron pincers to devour the snake. With a bounce, the snake changed again into a spotted bustard standing by itself rather stupidly amid the water pepper along the bank. When Erlang saw that the human had changed into such a vulgar creature – for the spotted bustard is the basest and most promiscuous of birds, mating indiscriminately with phoenixes, hawks, or crows – he refused to approach him. Changing back into his true form, he went and stretched his bow to the fullest. With one pellet he sent the bird hurtling. The Great Sage took advantage of this opportunity, nonetheless. Rolling down the mountain slope, he squatted there to change again – this time into a little temple for the local spirit. His wide-open mouth became the entrance, his teeth the doors, his tongue the Nun, and his eyes the windows. Only his tail he found to be troublesome, so he stuck it up in the back and changed it into a flagpole. The Mortal Master chased him down the slope but instead of the bustard he had hit he found only a little temple. He opened his phoenix eye quickly and looked at it carefully. Seeing the flagpole behind it, he laughed and said, "It's the human! Now he's trying to deceive me again! I've seen plenty of temples before but never one with a flagpole behind it. This must be another of that animal's tricks. Why should I let him lure me inside where he can bite me once I've entered? First I'll smash the windows with my fist! Then I'll kick down the doors!"

The Great Sage heard this and said in dismay, "How vicious! The doors are my teeth and the windows my eyes. What am I going to do with my eyes smashed and my teeth knocked out?" Leaping up like a tiger, he disappeared again into the air. The Mortal Master was looking all around for him when the four grand marshals and the two generals arrived together. "Elder Brother," they said, "have you caught the Great Sage?"

"A moment ago," said the Mortal Master laughing, "the human changed into a temple to trick me. I was about to smash the windows and kick down the doors when he vanished out of sight with a leap. It's all very strange! Very strange!" The Brothers were astonished but they could find no trace of him in any direction.

"Brothers," said the Mortal Master, "keep a lookout down here. Let me go up there to find him." He swiftly mounted the clouds and rose up into the sky where he saw Deity-King Li holding high the imp-reflecting mirror and standing on top of the clouds with Nata. "Deity-King," said the Mortal Master, "have you seen the King?"

"He hasn't come up here," said the Deity-King, "I've been watching him in the mirror."

After telling them about the duel in magic and transformations and the captivity of the rest of the humans, the Mortal Master said, "He finally changed into a temple. Just as I was about to attack him, he got away." When Deity-King Li heard these words, he turned the imp-reflecting mirror all the way around once more and looked into it. "Mortal Master," he said, roaring with laughter. "Go quickly! Quickly! That human used his magic of body concealment to escape from the cordon and he's now heading for the mouth of your River of Libations."

We now tell you about the Great Sage who had arrived at the mouth of the River of Libations. With a shake of his body, he changed into the form of Holy Dad Erlang. Lowering the direction of his cloud, he went straight into the temple, and the demon magistrates could not tell that he was not the real Erlang. Every one of them in fact saluted to receive him. He sat down in the middle and began to examine the various offerings; the three kinds of sacrificial meat brought by Li Hu, the votive offering of Zhang Long, the petition for a son by Zhao Jia, and the request for healing by Qian Bing. As he was looking at these, someone made the report, "Another Holy Dad has arrived!" The various demon magistrates went quickly to look and were terror-stricken, one and all. The Mortal Master asked, "Did a so-called Great Sage Equal to Heaven, come here?"

"We've not seen any Great Sage," said the demon magistrates. "But another Holy Dad is in there examining the offerings." The Mortal Master crashed through the door; seeing him, the Great Sage revealed his true form and said, "There's no need for the little boy to strive anymore! Sun is now the name of this temple!"

The Mortal Master lifted his divine lance of three points and two blades and struck but the King with agile body was quick to move out of the way. He whipped out that embroidery needle of his and with one wave caused it to take on the thickness of a rice bowl. Rushing forward, he engaged Erlang face to face. Starting at the door of the temple, the 2 combatants fought all the way back to the Flower-Fruit Mountain, treading on clouds and mists and shouting insults at each other. The 4 Deity-Kings and their followers were so startled by their appearance that they stood guard with even greater vigilance while the grand marshals joined the Mortal Master to surround the Handsome King. The demon king Mahābālī having requested the Mortal Master and his 6 Brothers to lead their troops to subdue the monster, returned to the Region Above to make his report. Conversing with the Nun Guanyin, the Queen Mum, and the various divine officials in the Hall of Divine Mists, the Jade Emperor said, "If Erlang's already gone into battle, why's no further report come back today?"

Folding her hands, Guanyin said, "Permit this humble cleric to invite Your Majesty and the Patriarch of Dao to go outside the South Heaven Gate so that you may find out personally how things are faring."

"That's a good suggestion," said the Jade Emperor.

He at once sent for his imperial carriage and went with the Patriarch, Guanyin, the Queen Mum, and the various divine officials to the South Heaven Gate where the cortege was met by celestial soldiers and guardians. They opened the gate and peered into the distance; there they saw cosmic nets on every side manned by celestial soldiers, Deity-King Li and Nata in mid-air holding high the imp-reflecting mirror and the Mortal Master and his Brothers encircling the Great Sage in the middle and fighting fiercely. The Nun opened her mouth and addressed Laozi: "What do you think of Erlang whom this humble cleric recommended? He's certainly powerful enough to have the Great Sage surrounded if not yet captured. I'll now help him to achieve his victory and make certain that the enemy will be taken prisoner."

"What weapon will the Nun use," asked Laozi, "and how'll you assist him?"

"I'll throw down my immaculate vase that I use for holding my willow sprig," said the Nun. "When it hits that human, at least it'll knock him over even if it doesn't kill him. Erlang, the Little Sage will then be able to capture him."

"That vase of yours," said Laozi, "is made of porcelain. It's all right if it hits him on the head. But if it crashed on the iron rod instead, won't it be shattered? You'd better not raise your hands; let me help him win."

The Nun said, "Do you've any weapon?"

"I do, indeed," said Laozi. He rolled up his sleeve and took down from his left arm an armlet, saying, "This is a weapon made of red steel, brought into existence during my preparation of elixir and fully charged with theurgical forces. It can be made to transform at will; indestructible by fire or water, it can entrap many things. It's called the diamond cutter or the diamond snare. The year when I crossed the Hangu Pass, I depended on it a great deal for the conversion of the barbarians for it's practically my bodyguard night and day. Let me throw it down and hit him."

After saying this, Laozi hurled the snare down from the Heaven Gate; it went tumbling down into the battlefield at the Flower-Fruit Mountain and landed smack on the King's head. The King was engaged in a bitter struggle with the 7 Sages and was completely unaware of this weapon that had dropped from the sky and hit him on the crown of his head. No longer able to stand on his feet, he toppled over. He managed to scramble up again and was about to flee when the Holy Dad Erlang's small hound dashed forward and bit him in the calf. He was pulled down for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time and lay on the ground cursing, "You brute! Why don't you go and do your master in instead of coming to bite old man?"

Rolling over quickly, he tried to get up but the Seven Sages all pounced on him and pinned him down. They bound him with ropes and punctured his breastbone with a knife, so that he could transform no further. Laozi retrieved his diamond snare and requested the Jade Emperor to return to the Hall of Divine Mists with Guanyin, the Queen Mum, and the rest of the Mortals. Down below the Four Great demigod Kings and Deity-King Li all retired their troops, broke camp, and went forward to congratulate Erlang, saying, "This is indeed a magnificent accomplishment by the Little Sage!"

"This has been the great blessing of the Heavenly deities," said the Little Sage, "and the proper exercise of their divine authority. What've I accomplished?"

The Brothers Kang, Zhang, Yao, and Li said, "Elder Brother need have no further discussion. Let's take this fellow up to the Jade Emperor to see what'll be done with him."

"Worthy Brothers," said the Mortal Master, "you may not have a personal audience with the Jade Emperor because you've not received any divine appointment. Let the celestial guardians take him into custody. I'll go with the Deity-King to the Region Above to make our report while all of you make a thorough search of the mountain here. After you've cleaned it out, go back to the River of Libations. When I've our deeds recorded and received our rewards, I'll return to celebrate with you."

The 4 grand marshals and the 2 generals followed his bidding. The Mortal Master then mounted the clouds with the rest of the deities, and they began their triumphal journey back to Heaven, reciting poems of victory all the way. In a little while, they reached the outer court of the Hall of Perfect Light, and the Heavenly preceptor went forward to memorialise to the Throne, saying, "The Four Great Deity-Kings have captured the monstrous human, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. They await the command of Your Majesty." The Jade Emperor then gave the order that the demon king Mahābālī and the celestial guardians take the prisoner to the monster execution block where he was to be cut to small pieces. Alas, this is what happens to *fraud and impudence, now punished by the Law; heroics grand will fade in the briefest time!*

## 007

### Brazier the Great Sage escapes from the 8 Trigrams; Mind Human's still beneath the 5 Phases Mountain<sup>1</sup>

*Fame and fortune all predestined; 1 must ever shun a guileful heart. Rectitude and truth, the fruits of virtue grow both long and deep. A little presumption brings on Heaven's wrath: though yet unseen, it'll surely come in time. Ask the Lord of the East<sup>2</sup> for why such pains and perils now appear: Because pride has sought to scale the limits, ignoring hierarchy to flout the law.* The Great Sage Equal to Heaven was taken by the celestial guardians to the monster execution block where he was bound to the monster-subduing pillar. They then slashed him with a scimitar, hewed him with an axe, stabbed him with a spear, and hacked him with a sword but they could not hurt his body in any way. Next, the Star Spirit of the South Pole ordered the various deities of the Fire Department to burn him with fire but that, too, had little effect. The gods of the Thunder Department were then ordered to strike him with thunderbolts but not a single one of his hairs was destroyed. The demon king Mahābālī and the others therefore went back to report to the Throne saying, "Your Majesty, we don't know where this Great Sage's acquired such power to protect his body. Your subjects slashed him with a scimitar and hewed him with an axe; also struck him with thunder and burned him with fire. Not a single one of his hair's destroyed. What'll we do?"

When the Jade Emperor heard these words, he said, "What indeed can we do to a fellow like that, a creature of that sort?"

Laozi then came forward and said, "That human ate the mortal peaches and drank the imperial juice. Moreover, he stole the divine elixir and ate five gourd-full of it, both raw and cooked. All this was probably refined in his stomach by the Fixity fire<sup>3</sup> to form a single solid mass. The union with his constitution gave him a diamond body that cannot be quickly destroyed. It would be better, therefore, if

this Daoist takes him away and places him in the Brazier of Eight Trigrams where he will be smelted by high and low heat. When he is finally separated from my elixir, his body will certainly be reduced to ashes." When the Jade Emperor heard these words, he told the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of Light to release the prisoner and hand him over to Laozi who left in obedience to the divine decree. Meanwhile, the illustrious Sage Erlang was rewarded with a hundred gold blossoms, a hundred bottles of imperial juice, 100 pellets of elixir, together with rare treasures, lustrous pearls, and brocades that he was told to share with his brothers. After expressing his gratitude, the Mortal Master returned to the mouth of the River of Libations. Arriving at the Tushita Palace, Laozi loosened the ropes on the Great Sage, pulled out the weapon from his breastbone, and pushed him into the Brazier of 8 Trigrams. He then ordered the Daoist who watched over the brazier and the page boy in charge of the fire to blow up a strong flame for the smelting process. The brazier was of 8 compartments corresponding to the eight trigrams of Qian, Kan, Gen, Zhen, Xun, Li, Kun, and Dui. The Great Sage crawled into the space beneath the compartment that corresponded to the Xun trigram. Now Xun symbolizes wind; where there is wind, there is no fire. However, wind could churn up smoke that at that moment reddened his eyes, giving them a permanently inflamed condition. Hence they were sometimes called Fiery Eyes and Diamond Pupils. Truly time passed swiftly, and the forty-ninth day arrived imperceptibly.<sup>4</sup> The alchemical process of Laozi was perfected, and on that day he came to open the brazier to take out his elixir. The Great Sage at the time was covering his eyes with both hands, rubbing his face and shedding tears. He heard noises on top of the brazier and, opening his eyes, suddenly saw light. Unable to restrain himself, he leaped out of the brazier and kicked it over with a loud crash. He began to walk straight out of the room while a group of startled fire tenders and guardians tried desperately to grab hold of him. Every one of them was overthrown; he was as wild as a white brow tiger in a fit, a one-horned dragon with a fever. Laozi rushed up to clutch at him, only to be greeted by such a violent shove that he fell head over heels while the Great Sage escaped. Whipping the compliant rod out from his ear, he waved it once in the wind and it had the thickness of a rice bowl. Holding it in his hands without regard for good or ill, he once more careened through the Heavenly Palace, fighting so fiercely that the Nine Luminaries all shut themselves in and the Four Deity-Kings disappeared from sight. Dear Monster! Here is a testimonial poem for him that says:

*This cosmic being fully fused with nature's gifts passes with ease through 10000 toils and tests.  
Vast and motionless like the 1 Great Void, perfect, quiescent, he's named the Primal Depth.  
Long refined in the brazier, he's no mercury or lead<sup>5</sup> just the very mortal, living above all things.  
Forever transforming, he changes still; 3 refuges and 5 commandments<sup>6</sup> he all rejects.*

Here is another poem:

*A spirit beam filling the supreme void – that's how the rod behaves accordingly.  
It lengthens or shortens as one would wish; upright or prone, it grows or shrinks at will.*

And another:

*An ape's body of Dao weds the human mind.  
Mind's a human – this meaning's profound.  
The Great Sage Equal to Heaven's no false thought.  
How could the post of Ban-Horse justly show his gifts?  
Horse works with Human means both mind and will need binding firmly. Don't seek them outside.  
All things back to Extinguishment follow 1 truth – to join Siddhartha beneath twin trees.<sup>7</sup>*

This time the King had no respect for persons great or small; he lashed out this way and that with his iron rod, and not a single deity could withstand him. He fought all the way into the Hall of Perfect Light and was approaching the Hall of Divine Mists where fortunately Numinous Officer Wang, <sup>8</sup>aide to the Mortal Master of Adjuvant Holiness was on duty. He saw the Great Sage advancing recklessly and went forward to bar his way, holding high his golden whip. "Wanton human," he cried, "where're you going? I'm here so don't you dare be insolent!" The Great Sage did not wait for further utterance; he raised his rod and struck at once while Numinous Officer met him also with brandished whip. The 2 of them charged into each other in front of the Hall of Divine Mists. What a fight that was between a red-blooded patriot of ample fame and a Heaven's rebel with notorious name! *The saint and sinner gladly tangle close so that 2 brave fighters can test their skills. Though the rod is fierce and the whip is fleet, how can the upright and just one forbear? This 1 is a supreme god of judgement with thunderous voice; the other, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, a monstrous human. The golden whip and the iron rod used by the 2 are both divine weapons from the House of God. At Divine Mists Treasure Hall they show their might today, each displaying his prowess winningly. This one brashly seeks to take the Big Dipper Palace; the other with all his strength defends the sacred realm. In bitter strife relentless they show their power; moving back and forth, whip or rod has yet to score.* The 2 of them fought for some time, and neither victory nor defeat could yet be determined. The Mortal Master of Adjuvant Holiness however, had already sent word to the Thunder Department, and 36 thunder deities were summoned to the scene. They surrounded the Great Sage and plunged into a fierce battle. The Great Sage was not in the least intimidated; wielding his compliant rod, he parried left and right and met his attackers to the front and to the rear. In a moment he saw that the scimitars, lances, swords, halberds, whips, maces, hammers, axes, gilt bludgeons, sickles, and spades of the thunder deities were coming thick and fast. So with one shake of his body he changed into a creature with 6 arms and 3 heads. One wave of the compliant rod and it turned into 3; his 6 arms wielded the 3 rods like a spinning wheel, whirling and dancing in their midst. The various thunder deities could not approach him at all. Truly his form was *tumbling round and round, bright and luminous; a form everlasting, how imitated by men? He cannot be burned by fire. Can he ever be drowned in water?*

*A lustrous pearl of man! he is indeed, immune to all the spears and the swords. He could be good or bad; present good and evil he could do at will. He'd be a mortal, a god, if he's good; <sup>10</sup>wickedness would cloak him with hair and horn. Endlessly changing he runs amok in Heaven, not to be seized by fighting lords or thunder gods.* At the time the various deities had the Great Sage surrounded but they could not close in on him. All the hustle and bustle soon disturbed the Jade Emperor who at once sent the Wandering Minister of Inspection and the Mortal Master of Blessed Wings to go to the Western Region and invite the aged God to come and subdue the monster. The two sages received the decree and went straight to the Spirit Mountain. After they had greeted the Four Lightning-Gods and the Eight Nuns in front of the Treasure Temple of Thunderclap, they asked them to announce their arrival. The deities therefore went before the Treasure Lotus Platform and made their report. Siddhartha at once invited them to appear before him and the two sages made obeisance to a god 3 times before standing in attendance beneath the platform. Siddhartha asked, "What causes the Jade Emperor to trouble the two sages to come here?"

The 2 sages explained as follows: "Some time ago there's born on the Flower-Fruit Mountain a human who exercised his magic powers and gathered to himself a troop of humans to disturb the world. The Jade Emperor threw down a decree of pacification and appointed him a Bimawen but he despised the lowliness of that position and left in rebellion. Deity-King Li and Prince Naṭa were sent to capture him but they were unsuccessful and another proclamation of amnesty was given to him. He's then made the Great Sage Equal to Heaven and a rank without compensation. After a while he's given the temporary job of looking after the Garden of Mortal Peaches where almost immediately he stole the peaches. He also went to the Jasper Pool and made off with the food and juice, devastating the Grand Festival. Half-drunk, he went secretly into the Tushita Palace, stole the elixir of Laozi, and then left the Celestial Palace in revolt. Again the Jade Emperor sent a hundred thousand Heavenly soldiers but he's not to be subdued. Thereafter Guanyin sent for the Mortal Master Erlang and his sworn brothers who fought and pursued him. Even then he knew many tricks of transformation and only after he was hit by Laozi's diamond snare could Erlang finally capture him. Taken before the Throne, he was condemned to be executed; but though slashed by a scimitar and hewn by an axe, burned by fire and struck by thunder, he's not hurt at all. After Laozi had received royal permission to take him away, he's refined by fire, and the brazier's not opened until the forty-ninth day. Immediately he jumped out of the Brazier of Eight Trigrams and beat back the celestial guardians. He penetrated into the Hall of Perfect Light and was approaching the Hall of Divine Mists when Numinous Officer Wang, aide to the Mortal Master of Adjuvant Holiness met and fought with him bitterly. Thirty-six thunder generals were ordered to encircle him completely but they could never get near him. The situation is desperate, and for this reason, the Jade Emperor sent a special request for you to defend the Throne."

When Siddhartha heard this, he said to the various Nuns, "All of you remain steadfast here in the chief temple and let no one relax his meditative posture. I've to go exorcise a demon and defend the Throne."

Siddhartha then called Ānanda and Kāśyapa, his 2 venerable disciples to follow him. They left the Thunderclap Temple and arrived at the gate of the Hall of Divine Mists where they were met by deafening shouts and yells. There the Great Sage was being beset by the 36 thunder deities. The Religious Patriarch gave the religion-order: "Let the thunder deities lower their arms and break up their encirclement. Ask the Great Sage to come out here and let me ask him what sort of divine power he has."

The various warriors retreated immediately and the Great Sage also threw off his magical appearance. Changing back into his true form, he approached angrily and shouted with ill humour, "What region are you from, monk, that you dare stop the battle and question me?"

Siddhartha laughed and said, "I'm Siddhartha the Venerable from the Western Region of Ultimate Bliss. I've heard just now about your audacity, wildness, and repeated acts of rebellion against Heaven. Where're you born and in which year did you succeed in acquiring the Way? Why're you so violent and unruly?"

The Great Sage said, "I was born of Earth and Heaven, mortal divinely fused, an old man hailing from the Flower-Fruit Mount. I made my home in the Water-Curtain Cave; seeking friend and teacher, I learned the Great Mystery. Perfected in the many arts of ageless life, I learned to change in ways boundless and vast. Too narrow the space I found on that mortal earth: I set my mind to live in the Green-jade Sky. In Divine Mists Hall none should long reside for king may follow king in the reign of man. If might is honour, let them yield to me. He only is hero who dares to fight and win!"

When the Religious Patriarch heard these words, he laughed aloud in scorn. "A fellow like you," he said, "is only a human who happened to become a spirit. How dare you be so presumptuous as to want to seize the honoured throne of the Exalted Jade Emperor? He began practicing religion when he was very young, and he has gone through the bitter experience of one thousand seven hundred and fifty *kalpas* with each *kalpa* lasting a hundred and twenty-nine thousand six centuries. Figure out yourself how many years it took him to rise to the enjoyment of his great and limitless position! You're merely a beast who has just attained human form in this disciple. How dare you make such a boast? Blasphemy! This is sheer blasphemy, and it will surely shorten your allotted age. Repent while there's still time and cease your idle talk! Be wary that you don't encounter such peril that you'll be cut down in an instant, and all your original gifts will be wasted."

"Even if the Jade Emperor's practiced religion from childhood," said the Great Sage, "he'd not be allowed to remain here forever. The proverb says, *many are the turns of kingship: by next year the turn will be mine!* Tell him to move out at once and hand over the Celestial Palace to me. That'll be the end of the matter. If not, I'll continue to cause disturbances and there'll never be peace!"

"Besides your mortality and your transformations," said the Religious Patriarch, "what other powers do you've that you dare to usurp this hallowed region of Heaven?"

"I've plenty of them!" said the Great Sage. "Indeed, I know seventy-two transformations and a life that does not grow old through ten thousand kalpas. I know also how to cloud somersault, and one leap will take me one hundred and eight thousand miles. Why can't I sit on the Heavenly throne?"

The Religious Patriarch said, "Let me make a wager with you. If you've the ability to somersault clear of this right palm of mine, I'll consider you the winner. You need not raise your weapon in battle then, for I'll ask the Jade Emperor to go live with me in the West and let you've the Celestial Palace. If you can't somersault out of my hand, you can go back to the Region Below and be a monster. Work through a few more *kalpas* before you return to cause more trouble."

When the Great Sage heard this, he said to himself, snickering, "What a fool this Siddhartha is! A single somersault of mine can carry old man a hundred and eight thousand miles yet his palm isn't even a foot across. How'd I possibly not jump clear of it?" He asked quickly, "You're certain that your decision will stand?"

"Certainly it'll," said Siddhartha. He stretched out his right hand that was about the size of a lotus leaf. Great Sage put away his compliant rod and, summoning his power, leaped up and stood right in the centre of the Patriarch's hand. He said simply, "I'm off!"

And he was gone – all but invisible like a streak of light in the clouds. Training the eye of wisdom on him, the Religious Patriarch saw that the King was hurtling along relentlessly like a whirligig. As the Great Sage advanced, he suddenly saw five flesh-pink pillars supporting a mass of green air. "This must be the end of the road," he said. "When I go back presently, Siddhartha will be my witness and I'll certainly take up residence in the Palace of Divine Mists." But he thought to himself, "Wait a moment! I'd better leave some kind of memento if I'm going to negotiate with Siddhartha." He plucked a hair and blew a mouthful of magic breath onto it, crying, "Change!" It changed into a writing brush with extra thick hair soaked in heavy ink. On the middle pillar he then wrote in large letters the following line: "The Great Sage Equal to Heaven, has made a tour of this place." When he had finished writing, he retrieved his hair, and with a total lack of respect he left a bubbling pool of human urine at the base of the first pillar. He reversed his cloud somersault and went back to where he had started. Standing on Siddhartha's palm, he said, "I left, and now I'm back. Tell the Jade Emperor to give me the Celestial Palace."

"You pisshead human!" scolded Siddhartha. "Since when did you ever leave the palm of my hand?"

The Great Sage said, "You're just ignorant! I went to the edge of Heaven, and I found five flesh-pink pillars supporting a mass of green air. I left a memento there. Do you dare go with me to have a look at the place?"

"No need to go there," said Siddhartha. "Just lower your head and take a look." When the Great Sage stared down with his fiery eyes and diamond pupils, he found written on the middle finger of the Religious Patriarch's right hand the sentence, "The Great Sage Equal to Heaven, has made a tour of this place." A pungent whiff of human urine came from the fork between the thumb and the first finger. Astonished, the Great Sage said, "Could this really happen? Could this really happen? I wrote those words on the pillars supporting the sky. How is it that they now appear on his finger? Could it be that he is exercising the magic power of foreknowledge without divination? I'll not believe it! I'll not believe it! Let me go there once more!"

Dear Great Sage! Quickly he crouched and was about to jump up again, when the Religious Patriarch flipped his hand over and tossed the King out of the West Heaven Gate. The 5 fingers were transformed into the 5 Phases of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. They became in fact 5 connected mountains named 5-Phases Mountain that pinned him down with just enough pressure to keep him there. The thunder deities, Ānanda, and Kāśyapa all folded their hands and cried in acclamation: “Praise be to virtue! Praise be to virtue! *He learned to be human, born from an egg that year, and aimed to reap the authentic Way’s fruit. He lived in a fine place by kalpas untouched. One day he changed, expending vim and strength. Craving high place, he flouted Heaven’s reign, mocked saints and stole pills, breaking great relations. Evil, full to the brim, now meets retribution. We know not when he may find release.*”

After the Religious Patriarch Siddhartha had vanquished the monstrous human, he at once called Ānanda and Kāśyapa to return with him to the Western Paradise. At that moment however, Tianpeng<sup>11</sup> and Tianyou, 2 celestial messengers, came running out of the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists and said, “We beg Siddhartha to wait a moment, please! Our Lord’s grand carriage will arrive shortly.” When the Religious Patriarch heard these words, he turned around and waited with reverence. In a moment he did indeed see a chariot drawn by eight colourful phoenixes and covered by a canopy adorned with nine luminous jewels. The entire cortege was accompanied by the sound of wondrous poems and melodies, recited by a vast celestial choir. Scattering precious blossoms and diffusing fragrant incense, it came up to a god, and the Jade Emperor offered his thanks, saying, “We’re truly indebted to your mighty religion for vanquishing that monster. We beseech Siddhartha to remain for one brief day, so that we may invite the mortals to join us in giving you a banquet of thanks.” Not daring to refuse, Siddhartha folded his hands to thank the Jade Emperor, saying, “Your old monk came here at your command, Most Honourable demigod. Of what power may I boast, really? I owe my success entirely to the excellent fortune of Your Majesty and the various deities. How can I be worthy of your thanks?”

The Jade Emperor then ordered the various deities from the Thunder Department to send invitations abroad to the 3 Pure Ones, the 4 Ministers, the 5 Elders, the 6 Lady Officials, <sup>12</sup>the 7 Stars, the 8 Poles, the 9 Luminaries, and the 10 Capitals. Together with 1000 mortals and 10000 sages, they were to come to the thanksgiving banquet given for the Religious Patriarch. The 4 Great Imperial Preceptors and the Divine Maidens of 9 Heavens were told to open wide the golden gates of the Jade Capital, the Treasure Palace of Primal Secret, and the 5 Lodges of Penetrating Brightness. Siddhartha was asked to be seated high on the Numinous Terrace of 7 Treasures, the rest of the deities were then seated according to rank, age before a banquet of dragon livers, phoenix marrow, juices of jade, and mortal peaches. In a little while, the Jade-Pure Celestial Worthy of Commencement, the Highest-Pure Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure, the Great-Pure Celestial Worthy of Moral Virtue,<sup>13</sup> the Mortal Masters of 5 Influences, the Star Spirits of 5 Constellations, the 3 Ministers, the 4 Sages, the 9 Luminaries, the Left and Right Assistants, the Deity-King, Prince Naṭa all marched in leading a train of flags, and canopies in pairs. They were all holding rare treasures and lustrous pearls, fruits of longevity and exotic flowers to be presented to a god. As they saluted before him, they said, “We’re most grateful for the unfathomable power of Siddhartha who’s subdued the monstrous human. We’re grateful, too to the Most Honourable demigod who’s having this banquet and asked us to come here to offer our thanks. May we beseech Siddhartha to give this banquet a name?”

Responding to the petition of the various deities, Siddhartha said, “If a name is desired, let this be called *the Great Banquet for Peace in Heaven.*” “What a magnificent name!” the various Mortals cried in unison. “Indeed, it’ll be the Great Banquet for Peace in Heaven.” When they finished speaking, they took their seats separately and there was the pouring of juice and exchanging of cups, pinning of corsages<sup>14</sup> and playing of zithers. It was indeed a magnificent banquet for which a testimonial poem says:

*That Mortal Peach Feast the human disturbed is topped by this Banquet for Peace in Heaven.  
Dragon flags and phoenix carts glow in halos bright; blazing signs and banners whirl in hallowed light.  
The poems divine are sweet and fair; Phoenix pipes and jade flutes both loudly play.  
Fragrant incense shrouds this assembly of saints. All the world’s tranquil to praise the Holy Court.*

As all of them were feasting merrily, the Lady Queen Mum also led a host of divine maidens and mortal reciting girls to come before a god, dancing with nimble feet. They saluted to him, and she said, “Our Festival of Mortal Peaches was ruined by that monstrous human. We’re beholden to the mighty power of Siddhartha for the enchainment of this mischievous human. In the celebration during this Great Banquet for Peace in Heaven, we’ve little to offer as a token of our thanks. Please accept however, these few mortal peaches plucked from the large trees by our own hands.” They were truly *half red, half green, and spouting aroma sweet, these luscious divine roots of 10 millennia. Pity those fruits planted at Wuling Spring!* <sup>15</sup>*How could they match the marvels of Heaven’s home: those tender ones of purple veins so rare in the world, and those peerlessly sweet of pale yellow pits? They lengthen age, prolong life, and change your frame. He who’s lucky to eat them will never be the same.* After the Religious Patriarch had pressed together his hands to thank the Queen Mum, she ordered the mortal reciting girls and the divine maidens to recite and exercise. All the mortals at the banquet applauded enthusiastically. Truly there were *whorls of Heavenly incense filling the seats, profuse array of divine petals, and stems. Jade capital and golden arches in what great splendour! How priceless, too, the strange goods and rare treasures! Every pair had the same age as Heaven. Every set increased through 10000 kalpas. Mulberry fields or vast oceans, let them shift and change. He who lives here has neither grief nor fear.* The Queen Mum commanded the mortal maidens to recite, exercise as cups, and goblets clinked together steadily. After a little while, suddenly a wondrous fragrance came to meet the nose, housing Stars and Planets in that great hall. *The gods and a god put down their cups. Raising his head, each waited with his eyes. There in the air appeared an aged man, holding a most luxuriant long-life plant. His gourd had elixir often millennium. His book listed names 12 millennia old. Sky and earth in his cave knew no constraint. Sun and moon were perfected in his vase.* <sup>16</sup>*He roamed the 4 Seas in joy serene and made the Ten Islets<sup>17</sup> his tranquil home. Getting drunk often at the Peaches Feast he woke; the moon shone brightly as of old. He had a long head, short frame, and large ears. His name: Star of Long Life from South Pole.* After the Star of Long Life arrived and greeted the Jade Emperor, he also went up to thank Siddhartha, saying, “When I first heard that the baneful human was being led by Laozi to the Tushita Palace to be refined by alchemical fire, I thought peace was surely secured. I never suspected that he could still escape, and it was fortunate that Siddhartha in his goodness had subdued this monster. When I got word of the thanksgiving banquet, I came at once. I’ve no other gifts to present to you but these purple agaric, jasper plant, jade-green lotus root, and golden elixir.” The poem says:

*Jade-green lotus and golden drug are given to Śākya.  
Like the sands of Ganges’s the age of Siddhartha.  
The brocade of the 3 wains is calm, eternal bliss.<sup>18</sup>  
The 9-grade garland’s a wholesome, endless life.<sup>19</sup>  
The true master of the Madhyamika School<sup>20</sup> dwells in the Heaven of both form and emptiness.<sup>21</sup>  
The great earth and cosmos all call him Lord.  
His 16-foot diamond frame’s great in blessing and age.<sup>22</sup>*

Siddhartha accepted the thanks cheerfully, and the Star of Long Life went to his seat. Again there was pouring of juice and exchanging of cups. The Great Mortal of Naked Feet also arrived. After saluting himself before the Jade Emperor, he too went to thank the Religious Patriarch, saying, “I’m profoundly grateful for your religion that subdued the baneful human. I’ve no other things to convey my respect but two magic pears and some lire dates that I now present to you.” The poem says:

*The Naked-Feet Mortal brought fragrant pears and dates to give to Infinite Light whose count of years is long.  
Firm as a hill is his Lotus Platform of 7 Treasures; brocade-like is his Flower Seat of 1000 Gold adorned.  
No false speech’s this – his age equals Heaven and Earth; nor is this a lie – his luck’s great as the sea.  
Blessing and long life reach in him their fullest scope, dwelling in that Western Region of calm, eternal bliss.*

Siddhartha again thanked him and asked Ānanda and Kāśyapa to put away the gifts 1 by 1 before approaching the Jade Emperor to express his gratitude for the banquet. By now everyone was somewhat tipsy. A Spirit Minister of Inspection then arrived to make the report, “The Great Sage’s sticking out his head!” “No need to worry,” said the Religious Patriarch. He took from his sleeve a tag on which were written in gold letters the words:

*Praise to the Jewel in the Lotus*  
Handing it over to Ānanda, he told him to stick it on the top of the mountain. This demigod received the tag, took it out of the Heaven Gate, and stuck it tightly on a square piece of rock at the top of the Mountain of 5 Phases. The mountain immediately struck root and grew together at the seams though there was enough space for breathing and for the prisoner’s hands to crawl out and move around a bit. Ānanda then returned to report, “The tag’s tightly attached.” Siddhartha then took leave of the Jade Emperor and the deities and went with the 2 deities out of the Heaven Gate. Moved by compassion he recited a divine spell and called together a local spirit and the Fearless Guards of 5 Quarters to stand watch over the 5-Phases Mountain. They were told to feed the prisoner with iron pellets when he was hungry and to give him melted copper to drink when he was thirsty. When the time of his chastisement was fulfilled, they were told, someone would be coming to deliver him. So it is that *the brash, baneful human in revolt against Heaven is brought to submission by Siddhartha. He drinks melted copper to endure the seasons and feeds on iron pellets to pass the time. Tried by this bitter misfortune sent from the Sky, he is glad to be living, though in a piteous lot. If this hero is allowed to struggle anew, he will serve God in future and go to the West.* A poem says:

*Prideful of his power once the time was ripe, he tamed dragon and tiger, flaunting wily might.  
Stealing peaches and juice, he roamed Heaven’s House.  
He found trust and grace in the City of Jade.  
He’s now bound, for his evil’s full to the brim.  
By good stock<sup>23</sup> unailing his breath will rise again.  
If he’s indeed to flee Siddhartha’s hands, he must await from Tang court the holy monk.*

**PART II**  
**GUANYIN**  
**008**

**Our God makes scriptures to impart ultimate bliss; Guanyin receives the decree to go up to Chang’an**

*Ask at meditation-pass why even countless queries would lead to just empty old age!  
Shine bricks to make mirrors? Hoard snow for foodstuff?<sup>22</sup>  
How many youths are thus deceived; a feather swallows the great ocean? A mustard seed holds the Sumeru<sup>23</sup>  
Golden Dhūta’s gently smiling.<sup>4</sup>The enlightened transcends the 10 stops<sup>5</sup> and 3 wains<sup>6</sup> sluggards must join the 4 beasts and 6 ways.<sup>7</sup>  
Who can hear below the Thoughtless Cliff, beneath the Shadow-less Tree, the cuckoo’s one call for the dawn of spring?  
Roads at Caoxi, perilous; <sup>8</sup>clouds on Vulture’s Peak, dense; <sup>9</sup>here an old friend’s voice turns mute.  
At a 10000-foot waterfall where a 5-petal lotus unfolds, incense wraps an old temple’s drapes.  
In that hour, once you break through to the source, the Dragon King’s 3 jewels you’ll see.<sup>10</sup>*

This poem is named *Su Wu at Slow Pace*. The sovereign Siddhartha took leave of the Jade Emperor and returned to the Treasure Monastery of Thunderclap. All the 3000 Gods, the 500 *Arhats*, the 8 diamond kings, the countless Nuns held temple pennants, embroidered canopies, rare treasures, and mortal flowers forming an orderly array before the Spirit Mountain and beneath the 2 Śāla Trees to welcome him. Siddhartha stopped his hallowed cloud and said to them, “*I’ve with deepest Prajñā* (Wisdom and understanding) *looked through the three realms. All fundamental nature will end in extinction like empty phenomena existing as nothing. The wily ape’s extirpation, this, none can comprehend. Name, birth, death, and origin of all forms appear thus.*” When he had finished speaking, he beamed forth the sari light that filled the air with forty-two white rainbows, connected end to end from north to south. Seeing this, the crowd saluted down and worshipped. In a little while, Siddhartha gathered together the holy clouds and blessed fog, ascended the lotus platform of the highest rank, and sat down solemnly. Those 3000 Gods, 500 *Arhats*, 8 diamond kings, and 4 Nuns folded their hands and drew near. After saluting down, they asked, “The one who caused disturbance in Heaven and ruined the Peach Festival who’s he?” “That fellow’s,” said Siddhartha, “a baneful monkey born in the Flower-Fruit Mountain. His wickedness was beyond all bounds and defied description. The divine warriors of the entire Heaven could not bring him to submission. Though Erlang caught him and Laozi tried to refine him with fire, they could not hurt him at all. When I arrived, he’s just making an exhibition of his might and prowess in the midst of the thunder deities. When I stopped the fighting and asked about his antecedents, he said that he’d magic powers, knowing how to transform himself and how to cloud somersault that would carry him a hundred and eight thousand miles at a time. I made a wager with him to see whether he could leap clear of my hand. I then grabbed hold of him while my fingers changed into the Mountain of Five Phases that had him firmly pinned down. The Jade Emperor opened wide the golden doors of the Jade Palace, invited me to sit at the head table, and gave a Banquet for Peace in Heaven to thank me. It was only a short while ago that I took leave of the throne to come back here.”

All were delighted by these words. After they had expressed their highest praise for a god, they withdrew according to their ranks; they went back to their several duties and enjoyed the permanent reality underlying all phenomena. Truly it is the scene of *holy mist encompassing Tianzhu* (India), *rainbow light enclosing the Honoured 1 who is called the First in the West, the King of the Formlessness*

School. Often black apes are seen presenting fruits. Tailed-deer holding flowers in their mouths, blue phoenixes dancing, colourful birds reciting, the spirit tortoise boasting of his age, and the divine crane picking agaric. They enjoy in peace the Pure Land's Jetavana, <sup>18</sup>the Dragon Palace, and worlds vast as Ganges' sands. Every day the flowers bloom; every hour the fruits ripen. They work silence to reach perfection. They meditate to bear the right fruit. They do not die nor are they born. No growth is there, nor any decrease. Mist and smoke wraithlike may come and go. No seasons intrude, nor are years recalled. The poem says:

To go or come is casual and free; of fear or sorrow there's not 1 degree.  
Fields of Ultimate Bliss are flat and wide. In this great world no 4 seasons abide.

As the Religious Patriarch lived in the Treasure Monastery of the Thunderclap in the Spirit Mountain, he called together one day the various Gods, Arhats, guardians, Nuns, diamond kings, and mendicant monks and nuns and said to them, “We don’t know how much time has passed here since I subdued the wily monkey and pacified Heaven but I suppose at least half a millennium has gone by in the worldly realm. As this is the fifteenth day of the first month of autumn, I’ve prepared a treasure bowl filled with a hundred varieties of exotic flowers and a thousand kinds of rare fruit. I’d like to share them with all of you in celebration of the Feast of the Ullambana (All Souls) Bowl. How about it?” Every one of them folded his hands and paid obeisance to a god 3 times to receive the festival. Siddhartha then ordered Ānanda to take the flowers and fruits from the treasure bowl, and Kāśyapa was asked to distribute them. All were thankful, and they presented poems to express their gratitude. The poem of blessing says:

The star of blessing shines before the most venerable one of the world who enjoys blessing lasting and immense.  
His blessing's boundless virtue endures as Earth. His blessing's source is gladly linked to Heaven.  
His blessing's fields, far planted, prosper each year. His blessing's sea, huge and deep, is ever strong.  
His blessing fills the world and all will be blessed. May his blessing increase, endless and complete.

The poem of wealth says:

His wealth weighs a mountain where the phoenix sings. His wealth trails the seasons to wish him long life.  
He gains wealth in huge sums as his body health. He joys in wealth abundant as the world in peace.  
His wealth's reach equals Heaven is ever safe. His wealth's name is sea-like but even more pure.  
His wealth's grace far-reaching is sought by all. His wealth is boundless, enriching countless lands.

The poem of long life says:

The Star of Long Life gives gifts to Siddhartha, from whom light of long life begins now to shine.  
The long life fruits fill the bowls with hues divine. The long life blooms, newly plucked, deck the lotus throne.  
The long life verse, how elegant and finely wrought. The long life poems are scored by gifted minds.  
The long life's length matches the sun and moon's. Long life's twice as long like the sea and mountain!

After the Nuns had presented their poems, they invited Siddhartha to disclose the origin and elucidate the source. Siddhartha gently opened his benevolent mouth to expound the great religion and to proclaim the truth. He lectured on the wondrous doctrines of the three vehicles, the form, reception (i.e., sensation and feeling), thought (i.e., discernment), action, and cognition, and the *Śūrangamā Thread*. As he did so, celestial dragons were seen circling above and flowers descended like rain in abundance. It was truly thus: *The Chan mind shines bright like a thousand rivers' moon; true nature's pure and great as an unclouded sky*. When Siddhartha had finished his lecture, he said to the congregation, “I’ve watched the Four Great Continents and the morality of their inhabitants varies from place to place. Those living on the East East-Videha revere Heaven and Earth and they are straightforward and peaceful. Those on the North Kuru though they love to destroy life, do so out of the necessity of making a livelihood. Moreover, they are rather dull of mind and lethargic in spirit, and they are not likely to do much harm. Those of our West Aparagodāniya are neither covetous nor prone to kill; they control their humour and temper their spirit. There is, to be sure, no illuminate of the first order but everyone is certain to attain longevity. Those who reside in the South Jambūdvīpa however, are prone to practice lechery and delight in evildoing, indulging in much slaughter and strife. Indeed, they are all caught in the treacherous field of tongue and mouth, in the wicked sea of slander and malice. However, I’ve three baskets of true scriptures that can persuade man to do good.”

Upon hearing these words, the various Nuns folded their hands and saluted down. “What are the three baskets of authentic scriptures,” they asked, “that Siddhartha possesses?” Siddhartha said, “I’ve one collection of Vinaya that speaks of Heaven; one collection of treatises that tells of the Earth; and one collection of *Threads* that redeems the damned. Altogether the three collections of scriptures contain thirty-five divisions written in fifteen thousand one hundred forty-four scrolls. They are the scriptures for the cultivation of mortality; they are the gate to ultimate virtue. I myself would like to send these to the Land of the East; but the creatures in that region are so stupid and so scornful of the truth that they ignore the weighty elements of our Law and mock the true sect of Yoga. Somehow we need a person with power to go to the Land of the East and find a virtuous believer. He will be asked to experience the bitter travail of passing through a thousand mountains and ten thousand waters to come here in quest of the authentic scriptures, so that they may be forever implanted in the east to enlighten the people. This will provide a source of blessings great as a mountain and deep as the sea. Which one of you is willing to make such a trip?”

At that moment, the Nun Guanyin came near the lotus platform and paid obeisance three times to a god, saying, “Though your disciple is untalented, she is willing to go to the Land of the East to find a scripture pilgrim.” Lifting their heads to look, the various Gods saw that the Nun had *a mind perfected in the four virtues, <sup>22</sup>a golden body filled with wisdom, Fringes of dangling pearls and jade, scented bracelets set with lustrous treasures, dark hair piled smartly in a coiled-dragon bun, and brocade sashes fluttering as phoenix quills. Her green jade buttons and white silk robe bathed in holy light; her velvet skirt and golden cords wrapped by hallowed air. With brows of new moon shape and eyes like two bright stars, her jade-like face beams natural joy, and her ruddy lips seem a flash of red. Her immaculate vase overflows with nectar from year to year, holding sprigs of weeping willow green from age to age. She disperses the eight woes; she redeems the multitude; she has great compassion; thus she rules the Tai Mountain and lives at the South Sea. She saves the poor, searching for their voices, ever heedful and solicitous, ever wise and efficacious. Her orchid heart delights in green bamboos; her chaste nature loves the wisteria. She is the merciful lord of the Potalaka Mountain, the Living Guanyin from the Cave of Tidal Sound*. When Siddhartha saw her, he was most delighted and said to her, “No other person is qualified to make this journey. It must be the Honourable Guanyin of mighty magic powers – she’s the one to do it!”

“As your disciple departs for the east,” said the Nun, “do you’ve any instructions?”

“As you travel,” said Siddhartha, “you’re to examine the way carefully. Do not journey high in the air but remain at an altitude halfway between mist and cloud so that you can see the mountains and waters and remember the exact distance. You’ll then be able to instruct closely the scripture pilgrim. Since he may still find the journey difficult, I’ll also give you five talismans.” Ordering Ānanda and Kāśyapa to bring out an embroidered cassock and a nine-ring priestly staff, he said to the Nun, “You may give this cassock and this staff to the scripture pilgrim. If he is firm in his intention to come here, he may put on the cassock and it will protect him from falling back into the wheel of transmigration. When he holds the staff, it will keep him from meeting poison or harm.” The Nun saluted low to receive the gifts. Siddhartha then took out also three fillets and handed them to the Nun, saying, “These treasures are called the tightening fillets, and though they are all alike, their uses are not the same. I’ve a separate spell for each of them: the Golden, the Constrictive, and the Prohibitive Spell. If you encounter on the way any monster who possesses great magic powers, you must persuade him to learn to be good and to follow the scripture pilgrim as his disciple. If he is disobedient, this fillet may be put on his head, and it will strike root the moment it comes into contact with the flesh. Recite the particular spell which belongs to the fillet and it will cause the head to swell and ache so painfully that he will think his brains are bursting. That will persuade him to come within our fold.”

After the Nun had saluted to a god and taken her leave, she called Disciple Hui’an to follow her. This Hui’an carried a huge iron rod that weighed a thousand pounds. He followed the Nun closely and served her as a powerful bodyguard. The Nun made the embroidered cassock into a bundle and placed it on his back; she hid the golden fillets, took up the priestly staff, and went down the Spirit Mountain. Lo, this one journey will result in *a god son returning to keep his primal vow. The Gold Cicada Elder will clasp the Chandan* (a kind of southern Indian sandalwood). The Nun went to the bottom of the hill where she was received at the door of the Jade Perfection Daoist Abbey by the Great Mortal of Golden Head. The Nun was presented with tea but she did not dare linger long, saying, “I’ve received the religion-decree of Siddhartha to look for a scripture pilgrim in the Land of the East.”

The Great Mortal said, “When do you expect the scripture pilgrim to arrive?”

“I’m unsure,” said the Nun. “Perhaps in two or three years’ time he’ll be able to get here.” So she took leave of the Great Mortal and travelled at an altitude halfway between cloud and mist in order that she might remember the way and the distance. A testimonial poem for her says:

A search through 10000 miles – no need to say! To state who'll be found is no easy thing.  
Has not seeking someone been just like this? What's been my whole life, was that a mere chance?  
We preach the Dao, our method turns foolish when saying meets no belief; we preach in vain.  
To find some percipient I'd yield liver and gall. There's affinity, I think, lying straight ahead.

As the mentor and her disciple journeyed, they suddenly came upon a large body of Weak Water, for this was the region of the Flowing Sand River.<sup>24</sup> “My disciple,” said the Nun, “this place’s difficult to cross. The scripture pilgrim will be of temporal bones and mortal stock. How’ll he be able to get across?”

“Teacher,” said Hui’an, “how wide do you suppose this river’s?”

The Nun stopped her cloud to take a look and she saw that *in the east it touches the sandy coast; in the west it joins the barbaric states; in the south it reaches even Wuyishanli, or Arachosia; in the north it comes near the Tartars. Its width is 800 miles and its length must measure many thousand more. The water flows as if Earth is heaving its frame. The current rises like a mountain rearing its back. Outspread and immense; vast and interminable. The sound of its towering billows reaches distant ears. The raft of a god cannot come here, nor can a leaf of the lotus stay afloat. Lifeless grass in the twilight drifts along the crooked banks. Yellow clouds conceal the sun to darken the long dikes. Where can one find the traffic of merchants? Has there been ever a shelter for anglers? On the flat sand no wild geese descend; from distant shores comes the crying of apes. Only the red smartweed flowers know this scene, basking in the white duckweed's fragile scent*. The Nun was looking over the river when suddenly a loud splash was heard, and from the midst of the waves leaped an ugly and ferocious monster. He appeared to have *a green though not too green, and black though not too black, face of gloomy complexion; a long, though not too long, and short though not too short, sinewy body with naked feet. His gleaming eyes shone like 2 lights beneath the stove. His mouth forked at the corners, was like a butcher's bloody bowl. With teeth protruding like swords, knives, and red hair all dishevelled, he bellowed once and it sounded like thunder while his legs sprinted like whirling wind*. Holding in his hands a priestly staff, that fiendish creature ran up the bank and tried to seize the Nun. He was opposed however, by Hui’an who wielded his iron rod, crying, “Stop!”

But the fiendish creature raised his staff to meet him. So the two of them engaged in a fierce battle beside the Flowing Sand River that was truly terrifying. *The iron rod of Liberation displays its power to defend the Law; the monster-taming staff of the creature labours to show its heroic might. Two silver pythons exercise along the river's bank. A pair of godlike monks charge each other on the shore. This one plies his talents as the forceful lord of Flowing Sand. That one, to attain great merit, protects Guanyin by strength. This one chums up foam and stirs up waves. That one belches fog and spits out wind. The stirred-up foams and waves darken Heaven and Earth. The spat-out fog and wind make dim both sun and moon. The monster-taming staff of this one is like a white tiger emerging from the mountain; the iron rod of that one is like a yellow dragon lying on the way. When used by one, this weapon spreads open the grass and finds the snake. When let loose by the other that weapon knocks down the kite and splits the pine. They fight until the darkness thickens save for the glittering stars, and the fog looms up to obscure both sky and land. This one, long a dweller in the Weak Water, is uniquely fierce. That one, newly leaving the Spirit Mountain, seeks his first win. Back and forth along the river the two of them fought for twenty or thirty rounds without either prevailing, when the fiendish creature stilled the other's iron rod and asked, "What region do you come from that you dare oppose me, monk?"*

“I’m the second son of the Pagoda Bearer Deity-King,” said Liberation, “Liberation, Disciple Hui’an. I’m serving as the guardian of my mentor who is looking for a scripture pilgrim in the Land of the East. What kind of monster are you that you dare block our way?”

“I remember,” said the monster, suddenly recognising his opponent, “that you used to follow the Guanyin of the South Sea and practice austerities there in the bamboo grove. How did you get to this place?”

“Don’t you realise,” said Liberation, “that she is my mentor – the one over there on the shore?”

When the monster heard these words, he apologised repeatedly. Putting away his staff, he allowed Liberation to grasp him by the collar and lead him away. He lowered his head and saluted low to Guanyin, saying, “Nun, please forgive me and let me submit my explanation. I’m no monster; rather, I’m the Curtain-Raising General who waits upon the phoenix chariot of the Jade Emperor at the Divine Mists Hall. Because I carelessly broke a crystal cup at one of the Festivals of Mortal Peaches, the Jade Emperor gave me eight hundred lashes, banished me to the Region Below, and changed me into my present shape. Every seventh day he sends a flying sword to stab my breast and side more than a hundred times before it leaves me. Hence my present wretchedness! Moreover, the hunger and cold are unbearable, and I’m driven every few days to come out of the waves and find a traveller for food. I certainly did not expect that my ignorance would today lead me to offend the great, merciful Nun.”



"Because of your sin in Heaven," said the Nun, "you're banished. Yet the taking of life in your present manner surely is adding sin to sin. By the decree of God, I'm on my way to the Land of the East to find a scripture pilgrim. Why don't you come into my fold, take refuge in good works, and follow the scripture pilgrim as his disciple when he goes to the Western Heaven to ask God for the scriptures? I'll order the flying sword to stop piercing you. At the time when you achieve merit, your sin will be expiated and you'll be restored to your former position. How do you feel about that?"

"I'm willing," said the monster, "to seek refuge in right action." He said also, "Nun, I've devoured countless human beings at this place. There've even been a number of scripture pilgrims here and I ate all of them. The heads of those I devoured I threw into the Flowing Sand, and they sank to the bottom, for such is the nature of this water that not even goose down can float on it. But the skulls of the nine pilgrims floated on the water and would not sink. Regarding them as something unusual, I chained them together with a rope and played with them at my leisure. If this becomes known, I fear that no other scripture pilgrim will want to come this way. Won't it jeopardize my future?"

"Not come this way? How absurd!" said the Nun. "You may take the skulls and hang them round your neck. When the scripture pilgrim arrives, there will be a use for them."

"If that's the case," said the monster, "I'm now willing to receive your instructions." The Nun then touched the top of his head and gave him the commandments.<sup>26</sup> The sand was taken to be a sign, and he was given the surname *Sand* and the religious name *Awakened to Purity*,<sup>27</sup> and that was how he entered the Gate of Sand.<sup>28</sup> After he had seen the Nun on her way, he washed his heart and purified himself; he never took life again but waited attentively for the arrival of the scripture pilgrim.

So the Nun parted with him and went with Liberation toward the Land of the East. They travelled for a long time and came upon a high mountain that was covered by miasma so foul that they could not ascend it on foot. They were just about to mount the clouds and pass over it when a sudden blast of violent wind brought into view another monster of most ferocious appearance. Look at his *lips curled and twisted like dried lotus leaves; ears like rush-leaf fans and hard, gleaming eyes; gaping teeth as sharp as a fine steel file's; a long mouth wide open like a fire pot. A gold cap is fastened with bands by the cheek. Straps on his armour seem like scale-less snakes. He holds a rake – a dragon's outstretched claws; from his waist hangs a bow of half-moon shape. His awesome presence and his prideful mien defy the deities and daunt the gods.* He rushed up toward the two travellers and without regard for good or ill, lifted the rake and brought it down hard on the Nun. But he was met by Disciple Hui'an who cried with a loud voice, "Reckless monster! Desist from this insolence! Look out for my rod!"

"This monk," said the monster, "doesn't know any better! Look out for my rake!" The 2 of them clashed together at the foot of the mountain to discover who was to be the victor. *It was a magnificent battle! The monster's fierce. Hui'an's powerful. The iron rod jabs at the heart; the muckrake swipes at the face. Spraying mud and splattering dust darken Heaven and Earth; flying sand and hurling rocks scare demons and gods. The 9-teeth rake, all burnished, loudly jingles with double rings; the single rod, black throughout, leaps and flies in both hands. This one is the prince of a Deity-King; that one is the spirit of a grand marshal. This one defends the faith at Potalaka; that one lives in a cave as a monster. Meeting this time they rush to fight, not knowing who shall lose and who shall win.* At the very height of their battle, Guanyin threw down some lotus flowers from mid-air, separating the rod from the rake. Alarmed by what he saw, the fiendish creature asked, "What region are you from, monk that you dare to play this *flower-in-the-eye* trick on me?"

"Cursed beast of fleshly eyes and mortal stock!" said Liberation. "I'm the disciple of the Nun from South Sea, and these are lotus flowers thrown down by my mentor. Don't you recognise them?"

"The Nun from South Sea?" asked the fiend. "Is she Guanyin who sweeps away the three calamities and rescues us from the eight disasters?"

"Who else," said Liberation, "if not she?"

The fiend threw away his muckrake, lowered his head, and saluted saying, "Venerable brother! Where's the Nun? Please be as good as to introduce me to her."

Liberation raised his head and pointed upward, saying, "Isn't she up there?"

"Nun!" the fiend respected toward her and cried with a loud voice, "Pardon my sin! Pardon my sin!"

Guanyin lowered the direction of her cloud and came to ask him, "What region are you from, wild bull who has become a spirit or old sow who has become a fiend, that you dare bar my way?"

"I'm neither a wild bull," said the fiend, "nor am I an old sow! I was originally the Marshal of the Heavenly Reeds in the Heavenly River.<sup>29</sup> Because I got drunk and dallied with a goddess of the Moon,<sup>30</sup> the Jade Emperor had me beaten with a mallet two thousand times and banished me to the world of dust. My true spirit was seeking the proper home for my next disciple when I lost my way, passed through the womb of an old sow, and ended up with a shape like this! Having bitten the sow to death and killed the rest of the litter, I took over this mountain ranch and passed my days eating people. Little did I expect to run into the Nun. Save me, I implore you! Save me!"

"What is the name of this mountain?" asked the Nun.

"It's called the Mountain of the Blessed Mound," said the fiendish creature, "and there is a cave in it by the name of Cloudy Paths. There was a Second Elder Sister Egg originally in the cave. She saw that I knew something of the martial art and therefore asked me to be the head of the family, following the so-called practice of 'standing backward in the door.'<sup>31</sup> After less than a year, she died, leaving me to enjoy the possession of her entire cave. I've spent many days and years at this place but I know no means of supporting myself and I pass the time eating people. I implore the Nun to pardon my sin."

The Nun said, "There's an old saying: *If you want to have a future, don't act heedless of the future.* You've already transgressed in the Region Above, and yet you've not changed your violent ways but indulge in the taking of life. Don't you know that both crimes will be punished?"

"The future! The future!" said the fiend. "If I listen to you, I might as well feed on the wind! The proverb says: *if you follow the law of the court, you'll be beaten to death; if you follow the law of God, you'll be starved to death!*

Let me go! Let me go! I'd much prefer catching a few travellers and munching on the plump and juicy lady of the family. Why should I care about two crimes, three crimes, a thousand crimes, or ten thousand crimes?"

"There is a saying," said the Nun, "*A man with good intent will win Heaven's assent.*

If you're willing to return to the fruits of truth, there will be means to sustain your body. There are five kinds of grain in this world and they all can relieve hunger. Why do you need to pass the time by devouring humans?"

When the fiend heard these words, he was like one who woke from a dream, and he said to the Nun, "I'd very much like to follow the truth. But 'since I've offended Heaven, even my prayers are of little avail.'<sup>32</sup> "I've received the decree from God to go to the Land of the East to find a scripture pilgrim," said the Nun. "You can follow him as his disciple and make a trip to the Western Heaven; your merit will cancel out your sins, and you'll surely be delivered from your calamities."

"I'm willing. I'm willing," promised the fiend with enthusiasm. The Nun then touched his head and gave him the instructions. Pointing to his body as a sign, she gave him the surname *Bullseye* and the religious name *Aware of Ability*.<sup>33</sup> From that moment on, he accepted the commandment to return to the real. He fasted and ate only a vegetable diet, abstaining from the five forbidden viands and the three undesirable foods<sup>34</sup> so as to wait single-mindedly for the scripture pilgrim. The Nun and Liberation took leave of Aware of Ability and proceeded again halfway between cloud and mist. As they were journeying, they saw in mid-air a young dragon calling for help. The Nun drew near and asked, "What dragon are you, and why are you suffering here?" The dragon said, "I'm the son of Aorun, Dragon King of the Western Ocean. Because I inadvertently set fire to the palace and burned some of the pearls therein, my dad the king memorialised to the Court of Heaven and charged me with grave disobedience. The Jade Emperor hung me in the sky and gave me three hundred lashes, and I'll be executed in a few days. I beg the Nun to save me."

When Guanyin heard these words, she rushed with Liberation up to the South Heaven Gate. She was received by Qiu and Zhang, the two Celestial Masters who asked her, "Where are you going?"

"This humble cleric needs to have an audience with the Jade Emperor," said the Nun.

The 2 Celestial Masters promptly made the report, and the Jade Emperor left the hall to receive her. After presenting her greetings, the Nun said, "By the decree of God, this humble cleric is journeying to the Land of the East to find a scripture pilgrim. On the way I met a mischievous dragon hanging in the sky. I've come specially to beg you to spare his life and grant him to me. He can be a good means of transportation for the scripture pilgrim." When the Jade Emperor heard these words, he at once gave the decree of pardon, ordering the Heavenly sentinels to release the dragon to the Nun. The Nun thanked the Emperor while the young dragon also respected to the Nun to thank her for saving his life and pledged obedience to her command. The Nun then sent him to live in a deep mountain stream with the instruction that when the scripture pilgrim should arrive, he was to change into a white horse and go to the Western Heaven. The young dragon obeyed the order and hid himself. The Nun then led Liberation past the mountain, and they headed again toward the Land of the East. They had not travelled long before they suddenly came upon ten thousand shafts of golden light and 1000 layers of radiant vapour. "Teacher," said Liberation, "that luminous place must be the Mountain of Five Phases. I can see the tag of Siddhartha imprinted on it."

"So, beneath this place's," said the Nun, "where the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who disturbed Heaven and the Festival of Mortal Peaches is being imprisoned."

"Yes indeed," said Liberation. The mentor and her disciple ascended the mountain and looked at the tag on which was inscribed the divine words:

*Praise to the Jewel in the Lotus*

When the Nun saw this, she could not help sighing and composed the following poem:

*I rue the impish ape not heeding the Law who let loose wild heroics in bygone years.  
His mind puffed up, he wrecked the Peach Banquet and boldly stole in Tushita Palace.  
He found no worthy match in 10000 troops; through 9-fold Heaven he displayed his power.  
Imprisoned now by the sovereign who's thus come and gone, when'll he be free to show once more his might?*

As mentor and disciple were speaking, they disturbed the Great Sage who shouted from the base of the mountain, "Who is up there on the mountain composing verses to expose my faults?" When the Nun heard those words, she came down the mountain to take a look. There beneath the rocky ledges were the local spirit, the mountain god, and the Heavenly sentinels guarding the Great Sage. They all came and saluted to receive the Nun, leading her before the Great Sage. She looked and saw that he was pinned down in a kind of stone box: though he could speak, he could not move his body.

"You whose name is Sun," said the Nun, "do you recognise me?"

The Great Sage opened wide his fiery eyes and diamond pupils and nodded. "How could I not recognise you?" he cried. "You're the Mighty Deliverer, the Great Compassionate Nun Guanyin from the Potalaka Mountain of the South Sea. Thank you, thank you for coming to see me! At this place every day is like a year, for not a single acquaintance has ever come to visit me. Where did you come from?"

"I've received the decree from God," said the Nun, "to go to the Land of the East to find a scripture pilgrim. Since I was passing through here, I rested my steps briefly to see you."

"Siddhartha deceived me," said the Great Sage, "and imprisoned me beneath this mountain. For over five centuries already I've not been able to move. I implore the Nun to show a little mercy and rescue old monkey!"

"Your sinful karma is very deep," said the Nun. "If I rescue you, I fear that you'll again perpetrate violence, and that will be bad indeed."

"Now I know the meaning of penitence," said the Great Sage. "So I entreat the Great Compassion to show me the proper path, for I'm willing to practice cultivation."

Truly it is that *1 wish born in the heart of man is known throughout Heaven and Earth. If vice or virtue lacks reward, unjust must be the universe.* When the Nun heard those words from the prisoner, she was filled with pleasure and said to the Great Sage, "The scripture says, *when a good word is spoken, an answer will come from beyond a thousand miles; when an evil word is spoken, and opposition will hail from beyond a thousand miles.* If you've such a purpose, wait until I reach the Great Tang Nation in the Land of the East and find the scripture pilgrim. He will be told to come and rescue you, and you can follow him as a disciple. You'll keep the teachings and hold the rosary to enter our gate of God, so that you may again cultivate the fruits of righteousness. Will you do that?"

"I'm willing, I'm willing," said the Great Sage repeatedly.

"If you're indeed seeking the fruits of virtue," said the Nun, "let me give you a religious name."

"I've one already," said the Great Sage, "and I'm called Sun Wukong."

"There're two persons before you who came into our faith," said the delighted Nun, "and their names, too, are built on the word *Wu*. Your name will agree with theirs perfectly, and that is splendid indeed. I need not give you any more instruction, for I must be going."

So Great Sage with manifest nature and enlightened mind, returned to the Religious faith while the nun with attention and diligence, sought the divine monk. She left the place with Liberation and proceeded straight to the east; in a few days they reached Chang'an of the Great Tang Nation. Forsaking the mist and abandoning the cloud, mentor and disciple changed themselves into two wandering monks covered with scabby sores<sup>35</sup> and went into the city. It was already dusk. As they walked through one of the main streets, they saw a temple of the local spirit. They both went straight in, alarming the spirit and the demon guards who recognised the Nun. They respected to receive her, and the local spirit then ran quickly to report to the city's guardian deity, a god of the soil, and the spirits of various temples of Chang'an. When they learned that it was the Nun, they all came to pay homage, saying, "Nun, please pardon us for being tardy in our reception."

"None of you'd," said the Nun, "let a word of this leak out! I came here by the special decree of God to look for a scripture pilgrim. I'd like to stay just for a few days in one of your temples and I'll depart when the true monk's found." The various deities went back to their own places but they sent the local spirit off to the residence of the city's guardian deity so that the teacher and the disciple could remain incognito in the spirit's temple.

Chen Guangrui meets disaster, going to his post; Monk River Float repays his roots, avenging his parents

The city of Chang'an in the great nation's Shaanxi Province that was the place that kings and emperors from generation to generation had made their capital. Since the periods of Zhou, Qin, and Han, *3 counties of flowers bloomed like brocade and 8 rivers<sup>1</sup> flowed encircling the city*. It was truly a land of great scenic beauty. At this time the emperor Taizong<sup>2</sup> of the Great Tang dynasty was on the throne, and the name of his reign was Zhenguan. He had been ruling now for thirteen years, and the cyclical name of the year was Jisi.<sup>3</sup> The whole land was at peace: people came bearing tributes from eight directions, and the inhabitants of the whole world called themselves his subjects.

One day Taizong ascended his throne and assembled his civil and military officials. After they had paid him homage, the prime minister Wei Zheng<sup>4</sup> left the ranks and came forward to memorialise to the Throne, saying, "Since the world now is at peace and tranquillity reigns everywhere, we'd follow the ancient custom and establish sites for civil examinations, so that we may invite worthy scholars to come here and select those talents who will best serve the work of administration and government."

"Our worthy subject has voiced a sound principle in his memorial," said Taizong. He therefore issued a summons to be proclaimed throughout the empire: in every prefecture, county, and town, those who were learned in the Confucian classics who could write with ease and lucidity, and who had passed the three sessions of examination,<sup>5</sup> regardless of whether they were soldiers or peasants, would be invited to go to Chang'an to take the imperial examination.

This summons reached the place Haizhou where it was seen by a certain man named Chen E (with the courtesy name of Guangrui) who then went straight home to talk to his mum whose maiden name was Zhang. "The court," he said, "has sent a yellow summons, declaring in these southern provinces that there will be examinations for the selection of the worthy and the talented. Your child wishes to try out at such an examination, for if I manage to acquire an appointment, or even half a post, I'd become more of a credit to my parents, magnify our name, give my wife a title, benefit my son, and bring glory to this house of ours. Such is the aspiration of your son: I wish to tell my mum plainly before I leave."

"My son," said she of the Zhang family, "an educated person 'learns when he is young but leaves when he is grown.' You'd indeed follow this maxim. But as you go to the examination, you must be careful on the way, and, when you've secured a post, come home quickly." So Guangrui gave instructions for his family page to pack his bags, took leave of his mum, and began his journey. When he reached Chang'an, the examination site had just been opened, and he went straight in. He took the preliminary tests, passed them, and went to the court examination where in three sessions on administrative policy he took first place, receiving the title "*Zhuangyuan*," the certificate of which was signed by the Tang emperor's own hand. As was the custom, he was led through the streets on horseback for three days.

The procession at one point passed by the house of the chief minister, Yin Kaishan who had a daughter named Wenjiao, nicknamed Mantangjiao (A Hall of Loveliness). She was not yet married, and at this time she was just about to throw down an embroidered ball from high up on a festooned tower in order to select her spouse. It happened that Chen Guangrui was passing below the tower. When the young maiden saw Guangrui's outstanding appearance and knew that he was the recent *Zhuangyuan* of the examinations, she was very pleased. She threw down the embroidered ball that just happened to hit the black gauze hat of Guangrui. Immediately, lively poems of pipes and flutes could be heard throughout the area as scores of maids and serving-girls ran down from the tower, took hold of the bridle of Guangrui's horse, and led him into the residence of the chief minister for the wedding. The chief minister and his wife at once came out of their chambers, called together the guests and the master of ceremonies, and gave the girl to Guangrui as his bride. Together, they saluted to Heaven and Earth; then husband and wife saluted to each other before saluting the parents-in-law. The chief minister then gave a big banquet and everyone feasted merrily for a whole evening, after which the two of them walked hand in hand into the bridal chamber.

At the fifth watch early next morning, Taizong took his seat in the Treasure Hall of Golden Chimes as civil and military officials attended the court. Taizong asked, "What appointment should the new *Zhuangyuan* receive?"

The Prime Minister Wei Zheng said, "Your subject has discovered that within our territory there is a vacancy at Jiangzhou. I beg my Lord to grant him this post."

Taizong at once made him governor of Jiangzhou and ordered him to leave without delay. After thanking the emperor and leaving the court, Guangrui went back to the house of the chief minister to inform his wife. He took leave of his dad- and mum-in-law and proceeded with his wife to the new post at Jiangzhou. As they left Chang'an and went on their journey, the season was late spring: *a soft wind blew to green the willows; a fine rain spotted to redden the flowers*.

As his home was on the way, Guangrui returned to his house where husband and wife saluted together to his mum, Lady Zhang. "Congratulations, my son," said she of the Zhang family, "you even came back with a wife!"

"Your child," said Guangrui, "relied on the power of your blessing and was able to attain the undeserved honour of *Zhuangyuan*. By imperial command I was making a tour of the streets when, as I passed by the mansion of Chief Minister Yin, I was hit by an embroidered ball. The chief minister kindly gave his daughter to your child to be his wife and His Majesty appointed him governor of Jiangzhou. I've returned to take you with me to the post."

She of the Zhang family was delighted and packed at once for the journey. They had been on the road for a few days when they came to stay at the Inn of 10000 Flowers kept by a certain Liu Xiaoer. She of the Zhang family suddenly became ill and said to Guangrui, "I don't feel well at all. Let's rest here for a day or two before we journey again." Guangrui obeyed. Next morning there was a man outside the inn holding a golden carp for sale that Guangrui bought for a string of coins. He was about to have it cooked for his mum when he saw that the carp was blinking its eyes vigorously. In astonishment, Guangrui said, "I've heard that when a fish or a snake blinks its eyes in this manner, that's the sure sign that it's not an ordinary creature!" He therefore asked the angler, "Where did you catch this fish?"

"I caught it," said the angler, "from the river Hong some fifteen miles from this district."

Accordingly Guangrui sent the live fish back to the river and returned to the inn to tell his mum about it. "It's a good deed to release living creatures from captivity," said she of the Zhang family. "I'm very pleased."

"We've stayed in this inn now for three days," said Guangrui. "The imperial command is an urgent one. Your child intends to leave tomorrow but he would like to know whether mum has fully recovered." She of the Zhang family said, "I'm still not well, and the heat on the journey at this time of year, I fear, will only add to my illness. Why don't you rent a house for me to stay here temporarily and leave me an allowance? The two of you can proceed to your new post. By autumn, when it's cool, you can come fetch me." Guangrui discussed the matter with his wife; they duly rented a house for her and left some cash with her, after which they took leave and left.

They felt the fatigue of travelling, journeying by day and resting by night, and they soon came to the crossing of the Hong River where two boatmen, Liu Hong and Li Biao, took them into their boat. It happened that Guangrui was destined in his previous disciple to meet this calamity, and so he had to come upon these fated enemies of his. After ordering the houseboy to put the luggage on the boat, Guangrui and his wife were just about to embark when Liu Hong noticed the beauty of Lady Yin who had a face like a full moon, eyes like autumnal water, a small, cherry-like mouth, and a tiny, willow-like waist. Her features were striking enough to sink fishes and drop wild geese, and her complexion would cause the moon to hide and put the flowers to shame. Stirred at once to cruelty, he plotted with Li Biao; together they punted the boat to an isolated area and waited until the middle of the night. They killed the houseboy first, and then they beat Guangrui to death, pushing both bodies into the water. When the lady saw that they had killed her husband, she made a dive for the water but Liu Hong threw his arms around her and caught her. "If you consent to my demand," he said, "everything will be all right. If you don't, this knife will cut you in two!"

Unable to think of any better plan, the lady had to give her consent for the time being and yielded herself to Liu Hong. The thief took the boat to the south bank where he turned the boat over to the care of Li Biao. He himself put on Guangrui's cap and robe, took his credentials, and proceeded with the lady to the post at Jiangzhou. Now the body of the houseboy killed by Liu Hong drifted away with the current. The body of Chen Guangrui however, sank to the bottom of the water and stayed there. A Nature spirit on patrol at the mouth of the Hong River saw it and rushed into the Dragon Palace. The Dragon King was just holding court when the Nature spirit entered to report, saying, "A scholar has been beaten to death at the mouth of the Hong River by some unknown person, and his body is now lying at the bottom of the water." The Dragon King had the corpse brought in and laid before him. He took a careful look at it and said, "But this man was my benefactor! How could he have been murdered? As the common saying goes, 'Kindness should be paid by kindness.' I must save his life today so that I may repay the kindness of yesterday." He at once issued an official dispatch, sending a Nature spirit to deliver it to the municipal deity and local spirit of Hongzhou, and asked for the soul of the scholar so that his life might be saved. The municipal deity and the local spirit in turn ordered the little demons to hand over the soul of Chen Guangrui to the Nature spirit who led the soul back to the Water Crystal Palace for an audience with the Dragon King.

"Scholar," asked the Dragon King, "what is your name? Where did you come from? Why did you come here, and for what reason were you beaten to death?" Guangrui saluted him and said, "This lowly student is named Chen E, and my courtesy name is Guangrui. I'm from the Hongnong district of Haizhou. As the unworthy *Zhuangyuan* of the recent session of examination, I was appointed by the court to be governor of Jiangzhou, and I was going to my post with my wife. When I took a boat at the river, I didn't expect the boatman, Liu Hong, to covet my wife and plot against me. He beat me to death and tossed out my body. I beg the Great King to save me." Hearing these words, the Dragon King said, "So, that's it! Good sir, the golden carp that you released earlier was myself. You're my benefactor. You may be in dire difficulty at the moment but is there any reason why I'd not come to your assistance?" He therefore laid the body of Guangrui to one side, and put a preservative pearl in his mouth so that his body would not deteriorate but be reunited with his soul to avenge himself in the future. He also said, "Your true soul may remain temporarily in my Water Bureau as an officer."

Guangrui respected to thank him and the Dragon King prepared a banquet to entertain him. *Lady Yin hated the bandit Liu so bitterly that she wished she could devour his flesh and sleep on his skin!* But because she was with child and did not know whether it would be a boy or a girl, she had no alternative but to yield reluctantly to her captor. In a little while they arrived at Zhiangzhou; the clerks, the lectors all came to meet them, and all the subordinate officials gave a banquet for them at the governor's mansion. Liu Hong said, "Having come here, a student like me is utterly dependent on the support and assistance of you gentlemen."

"Your Honour," replied the officials, "is first in the examinations and a major talent. You'll, of course, regard your people as your children; your public declarations will be as simple as your settlement of litigation is fair. We subordinates are all dependent on your leadership, so why should you be unduly modest?" When the official banquet ended, the people all left.

Time passed by swiftly. One day, Liu Hong went far away on official business while Lady Yin at the mansion was thinking of her mum-in-law and her husband and sighing in the garden pavilion. Suddenly she was seized by tremendous fatigue and sharp pains in her belly. Falling unconscious to the ground, she gave birth to a son. Presently she heard someone whispering in her ear: "Mantangjiao, listen carefully to what I've to say. I'm the Star Spirit of South Pole who sends you this son by the express command of the Nun Guanyin. One day his name will be known far and wide, for he is not to be compared with an ordinary mortal. But when the bandit Liu returns, he will surely try to harm the child, and you must take care to protect him. Your husband has been rescued by the Dragon King; in the future both of you'll meet again even as son and mum will be reunited. A day will come when wrongs will be redressed and crimes punished. Remember my words! Wake up! Wake up!" The voice ceased and departed. The lady woke up and remembered every word; she clasped her son tightly to her but could devise no plan to protect him. Liu Hong then returned and wanted to have the child killed by drowning the moment he saw him. The lady said, "Today it's late already. Allow him to live till tomorrow and then have him thrown into the river."

It was fortunate that Liu Hong was called away by urgent business the next morning. The lady thought to herself: "If this child is here when that bandit returns, his life is finished! I might as well abandon him now to the river, and let life or death take its own course. Perhaps Heaven, taking pity on him, will send someone to his rescue and to have him cared for. Then we may have a chance to meet again." She was afraid however, that future recognition would be difficult; so she bit her finger and wrote a letter with her blood, stating in detail the names of the parents, the family history, and the reason for the child's abandonment. She also bit off a little toe from the child's left foot to establish a mark of his identity. Taking one of her own inner garments she wrapped the child and took him out of the mansion when no one was watching. Fortunately the mansion was not far from the river. Reaching the bank, the lady burst into tears and wailed long and loud. She was about to toss the child into the river when she caught sight of a plank floating by the river bank. At once she prayed to Heaven, after which she placed the child on the plank and tied him securely to it with some rope. She fastened the letter written in blood to his chest, pushed the plank out into the water, and let it drift away. With tears in her eyes, the lady went back to the mansion. The boy on the plank floated with the current until it came to a standstill just beneath the Temple of Gold Mountain. The abbot of this temple was called Monk Faming. In the cultivation of perfection and comprehension of truth, he had attained already the wondrous secret of birth-less-ness. He was sitting in meditation when all at once he heard an infant crying. Moved by this, he went quickly down to the river to have a look, and discovered the baby lying there on a plank at the edge of the water. The abbot quickly lifted him out of the water. When he read the letter in blood fastened to his chest, he learned of the child's origin. He then gave him the baby name River Float<sup>6</sup> and arranged for someone to nurse and care for him while he himself kept the letter written in blood safely hidden. Time passed by like an arrow, and the seasons like a weaver's shuttle: River Float soon reached his eighteenth year. The abbot had his hair shaved and asked him to join in the practice of austerities, giving him the religious name Xuanzang. Having had his head touched and having received the commandments, Xuanzang pursued the Way with great determination.

One day in late spring, the various monks gathered in the shade of pine trees were discussing the canons of Chan and debating the fine points of the mysteries. One feckless monk who happened to have been completely outwitted by Xuanzang's questions, shouted angrily, "You damnable beast! You don't even know your own name, and you're ignorant of your own parents! Why are you still hanging around here playing tricks on people?" When Xuanzang heard such language of rebuke, he went into the temple and knelt before the master, saying with tears flowing from his eyes, "Though a human being born into this world receives his natural endowments from the forces of yin and yang and from the Five Phases, he is always nurtured by his parents. How can there be a person in this world who has no dad or mum?" Repeatedly and piteously he begged for the names of his parents. The abbot said, "If you truly wish to seek your parents, you may follow me to my cell." Xuanzang

duly followed him to his cell where, from the top of a heavy crossbeam, the abbot took down a small box. Opening the box, he took out a letter written in blood and an inner garment and gave them to Xuanzang. Only after he had unfolded the letter and read it did Xuanzang learn the names of his parents and understand in detail the wrongs that had been done them.

When Xuanzang finished reading, he fell weeping to the floor, saying, “How can anyone be worthy to bear the name of man if he cannot avenge the wrongs done to his parents? For eighteen years, I’ve been ignorant of my true parents, and only this day have I learned that I’ve a mum! And yet, would I’ve even reached this day if my master had not saved me and cared for me? Permit your disciple to go seek my mum. Thereafter, I’ll rebuild this temple with an incense bowl on my head, and repay the profound kindness of my teacher.”

“If you desire to seek your mum,” said the master, “you may take this letter in blood and the inner garment with you. Go as a mendicant monk to the private quarters at the governor’s mansion of Jiangzhou. You’ll then be able to meet your mum.”

Xuanzang followed the words of his master and went to Jiangzhou as a mendicant monk. It happened that Liu Hong was out on business, for Heaven had planned that mum and child should meet. Xuanzang went straight to the door of the private quarters of the governor’s mansion to beg for alms. Lady Yin had had a dream the night before in which she saw a waning moon become full again. She thought to herself, “I’ve no news from my mum-in-law; my husband was murdered by this bandit; my son was thrown into the river. If by chance someone rescued him and had him cared for, he must be eighteen by now. Perhaps Heaven wished us to be reunited today. Who can tell?”

As she was pondering the matter in her heart, she suddenly heard someone reciting the scriptures outside her residence and crying repeatedly, “Alms! Alms!” At a convenient moment, the lady slipped out and asked him, “Where did you come from?”

“Your poor monk,” said Xuanzang, “is the disciple of Faming, abbot of the Temple of Gold Mountain.”

“So you’re the disciple of the abbot of that temple?” she asked and invited him into the mansion and served him some vegetables and rice. Watching him closely, she noticed that in speech and manner he bore a remarkable resemblance to her husband. The lady sent her maid away and then asked, “Young master! Did you leave your family as a child or when you grew up? What are your given name and your surname? Do you’ve any parents?”

“I didn’t leave my family when I was young,” replied Xuanzang, “nor did I do so when I grew up. To tell you the truth, I’ve a wrong to avenge great as the sky, an enmity deep as the sea. My dad was a murder victim, and my mum was taken by force. My master the abbot Faming told me to seek my mum in the governor’s mansion of Jiangzhou.”

“What is your mum’s surname?” asked the lady. “My mum’s surname is Yin,” said Xuanzang, “and her given name is Wenjiao. My dad’s surname is Chen and his given name is Guangrui. My nickname is River Float but my religious name is Xuanzang.”

“I’m Wenjiao,” said the lady, “but what proof have you of your identity?” When Xuanzang heard that she was his mum, he fell to his knees and wept most grievously. “If my own mum doesn’t believe me,” he said, “you may see the proof in this letter written in blood and this inner garment.” Wenjiao took them in her hands, and one look told her that they were the real things. Mum and child embraced each other and wept.

Lady Yin then cried, “My son, leave at once!”

“For eighteen years I’ve not known my true parents,” said Xuanzang, “and I’ve seen my mum for the first time only this morning. How could your son bear so swift a separation?”

“My son,” said the lady, “leave at once, as if you’re on fire! If that bandit Liu returns, he will surely take your life. I’ll pretend to be ill tomorrow and say that I must go to your temple and fulfil a vow I made in a previous year to donate a hundred pairs of monk shoes. At that time I’ll have more to say to you.” Xuanzang followed her bidding and saluted to take leave of her.

We’re speaking of Lady Yin who, having seen her son, was filled with both anxiety and joy. The next day, under the pretext of being sick, she lay on her bed and would take neither tea nor rice. Liu Hong returned to the mansion and questioned her. “When I was young,” said Lady Yin, “I vowed to donate a hundred pairs of monk shoes. Five days ago, I dreamed that a monk demanded those shoes of me, holding a knife in his hand. From then on, I didn’t feel well.”

“Such a small matter!” said Liu Hong. “Why didn’t you tell me earlier?” He at once went up to the governor’s hall and gave the order to his stewards Wang and Li that a hundred families of the city were each to bring in a pair of monk shoes within five days. The families obeyed and completed their presentations. “Now that we’ve the shoes,” said Lady Yin to Liu Hong, “what kind of temple do we’ve nearby that I can go to fulfil my vow?” Liu Hong said, “There is a Temple of Gold Mountain here in Jiangzhou as well as a Temple of Burned Mountain. You may go to whichever one you choose.”

“I’ve long heard,” said the lady, “that the Temple of Gold Mountain is a very good one. I’ll go there.” Liu Hong at once gave the order to his stewards Wang and Li to prepare a boat. Lady Yin took a trusted companion with her and boarded the boat. The boatmen poled it away from the shore and headed for the Temple of Gold Mountain.

We now tell you about Xuanzang who returned to the temple and told the abbot Faming what had happened. The next day, a young housemaid arrived to announce that her mistress was coming to the temple to fulfil a vow she had made. All the monks came out of the temple to receive her. The lady went straight inside to worship the Nun and to give a great vegetarian banquet. She ordered the housemaid to put the monk shoes and stockings in trays and have them brought into the main ceremonial hall. After the lady had again worshipped with extreme devoutness, she asked the abbot Faming to distribute the gifts to the various monks before they dispersed. When Xuanzang saw that all the monks had left and that there was no one else in the hall, he drew near and knelt down. The lady asked him to remove his shoes and stockings, and she saw that there was, indeed, a small toe missing from his left foot. Once again, the two of them embraced and wept. They also thanked the abbot for his kindness in fostering the youth.

Faming said, “I fear that the present meeting of mum and child may become known to that wily bandit. You must leave speedily so that you may avoid any harm.”

“My son,” the lady said, “let me give you an incense ring. Go to Hongzhou, about fifteen hundred miles northwest of here where you’ll find the Ten Thousand Flowers Inn. Earlier we left an aged woman there whose maiden name is Zhang and who is the true mum of your dad. I’ve also written a letter for you to take to the capital of the Tang emperor. To the left of the Golden Palace is the house of Chief Minister Yin who is the true dad of your mum. Give my letter to your maternal grandpa, and ask him to request the Tang emperor to dispatch men and horses to have this bandit arrested and executed, so that your dad may be avenged. Only then will you be able to rescue your old mum. I daren’t linger now, for I fear that knave may be offended by my returning late.”

She went out of the temple, boarded the boat, and left. Xuanzang returned weeping to the temple. He told his master everything and saluted to take leave of him immediately. Going straight to Hongzhou, he came to the 10000 Flowers Inn and addressed the innkeeper, Liu Xiaoe saying, “In a previous year there’s an honoured guest here by the name of Chen whose mum remained at your inn. How’s she now?”

“Originally,” said Liu Xiaoe, “she stayed in my inn. Afterwards she went blind and for three or four years paid me no rent. She now lives in a dilapidated potter’s kiln near the Southern Gate and every day she goes begging on the streets. Once that honoured guest had left, he’s gone for a long time and even now there’s no news of him whatever. I can’t understand it.”

When Xuanzang heard this, he went at once to the dilapidated potter’s kiln at the Southern Gate and found his grandma. The grandma said, “Your voice sounds very much like that of my son Chen Guangrui.”

“I’m not Chen Guangrui,” said Xuanzang, “but only his son! Lady Wenjiao’s my mum.”

“Why didn’t your parents come back?” asked the grandma. “My dad’s beaten to death by bandits,” said Xuanzang, “and one of them forced my mum to be his wife.”

“How did you know where to find me?” asked the grandma.

“It was my mum,” answered Xuanzang, “who told me to seek my grandma. There’s a letter from mum here and there’s also an incense ring.”

The grandma took the letter and the incense ring and wept without restraint. “For merit and reputation,” she said, “my son came to this! I thought that he’d turned his back on righteousness and forgotten parental kindness. How’d I know that he’s murdered? Fortunately Heaven remembered me at least in pity and this day a grandson’s come to seek me out.”

“Grandma,” asked Xuanzang, “how did you go blind?”

“Because I thought so often about your dad,” said the grandma. “I waited for him daily but he did not return. I wept until I was blind in both eyes.”

Xuanzang knelt down and prayed to Heaven saying, “Have regard of Xuanzang who, at the age of eighteen, has not yet avenged the wrong done to his parents. By the command of my mum, I came this day to find my grandma. If Heaven would take pity on my sincerity, grant that the eyes of my grandma regain their sight.”

When he finished his petition, he licked the eyes of his grandma with the tip of his tongue. In a moment, both eyes were licked open and they were as of old. When the grandma saw the youthful monk, she said, “You’re indeed my grandson! Why, you’re just like my son Guangrui!”

She felt both happy and sad. Xuanzang led his grandma out of the kiln and went back to Liu Xiaoe’s inn where he rented a room for her to stay. He also gave her some money saying, “In a little more than a month’s time, I’ll be back.”

Taking leave of his grandma, he went straight to the capital and found his way to the house of the chief minister Yin on the eastern street of the imperial city. He said to the porter, “This little monk’s a kinsman who’s come to visit the chief minister.”

The porter made the report to the chief minister who replied, “I’m related to no monk!”

But his wife said, “I dreamed last night that my daughter Mantangjiao came home. It’d be that our son-in-law’s sent us a letter?” The chief minister therefore had the little monk shown to the living room.

When he saw the chief minister and his wife, he fell weeping to the floor. Taking a letter from within the folds of his robe, he handed it over to the chief minister. The chief minister opened it, read it from beginning to end, and wept without restraint. “Your Excellency, what’s the matter?” asked his wife.

“This monk’s,” said the chief minister, “our grandson. Our son-in-law, Chen Guangrui’s murdered by bandits and Mantangjiao’s made the wife of the murderer by force.”

When the wife heard this, she too wept inconsolably. “Let our lady restrain her grief,” said the chief minister. “Tomorrow morning I’ll present a memorial to our Lord. I’ll lead the troops myself to avenge our son-in-law.” The next day, the chief minister went into court to present his memorial to the Tang emperor that read:

*The son-in-law of your subject, the Zhuangyuan Chen Guangrui’s proceeding to his post at Jiangzhou with members of his family. He’s beaten to death by the boatman Liu Hong who then took our daughter by force to be his wife. He pretended to be the son-in-law of your subject and usurped his post for many years. This is indeed a shocking and tragic incident. I beg Your Majesty to dispatch horses and men at once to exterminate the bandits.*

The Tang emperor saw the memorial and became exceedingly angry. He immediately called up sixty thousand imperial soldiers and ordered the chief minister Yin to lead them forth. The chief minister took the decree and left the court to make the roll call for the troops at the barracks. They proceeded immediately toward Jiangzhou, journeying by day and resting by night, and they soon reached the place. Horses and men pitched camps on the north shore, and that very night, the chief minister summoned with golden tablets<sup>7</sup> the Sub-prefect and County Judge of Jiangzhou to his camp. He explained to the two of them the reason for the expedition and asked for their military assistance. They then crossed the river and, before the sky was light, had the mansion of Liu Hong completely surrounded. Liu Hong was still in his dreams when at the shot of a single cannon and the unison roll of drums, the soldiers broke into the private quarters of the mansion. Liu Hong was seized before he could offer any resistance. The chief minister had him and the rest of the prisoners bound and taken to the field of execution while the rest of the soldiers pitched camp outside the city.

Taking a seat in the great hall of the mansion, the chief minister invited the lady to come out to meet him. She was about to do so but was overcome by shame at seeing her dad again, and wanted to hang herself right there. Xuanzang learned of this and rushed inside to save his mum. Falling to his knees, he said to her, “Your son and his grandpa led the troops here to avenge dad. The bandit has already been captured. Why does mum want to die now? If mum were dead, how could your son possibly remain alive?” The chief minister also went inside to offer his consolation. “I’ve heard,” said the lady, “that a woman follows her spouse to the grave. My husband was murdered by this bandit, causing me dreadful grief. How could I yield so shamefully to the thief? The child I was carrying – that was my sole lease on life that helped me bear my humiliation! Now that my son is grown and my old dad has led troops to avenge our wrong, I who am the daughter have little face left for my reunion. I can only die to repay my husband!”

“My child,” said the chief minister, “you didn’t alter your virtue according to prosperity or adversity. You had no choice! How can this be regarded as shame?” Dad and daughter embraced, weeping; Xuanzang also could not contain his emotion. Wiping away his tears, the chief minister said, “The two of you must sorrow no more. I’ve already captured the culprit, and I must now dispose of him.” He got up and went to the execution site, and it happened that the Sub-prefect of Jiangzhou had also apprehended the pirate Li Biao who was brought by sentinels to the same place. Highly pleased, the chief minister ordered Liu Hong and Li Biao to be flogged a hundred times with large canes. Each signed an affidavit, giving a thorough account of the murder of Chen Guangrui. First Li Biao was nailed to a wooden ass, and after it had been pushed to the marketplace, he was cut to pieces and his head exposed on a pole for all to see. Liu Hong was then taken to the crossing at the Hong River, to the exact spot where he had beaten Chen Guangrui to death. The chief minister, the lady, and Xuanzang all went to the bank of the river, and as libations they offered the heart and liver of Liu Hong that had been gouged out from him live. Finally, an essay eulogizing the deceased was burned.

Facing the river the three persons wept without restraint, and their sobs were heard down below in the water region. A Nature spirit patrolling the waters brought the essay in its spirit form to the Dragon King who read it and at once sent a turtle marshal to fetch Guangrui. “Sir,” said the king, “Congratulations! Congratulations! At this moment, your wife, your son, and your dad-in-law are offering sacrifices to you at the bank of the river. I’m now letting your soul go so that you may return to life. We’re also presenting you with a pearl of wish fulfilment,<sup>8</sup> two rolling-pan pearls,<sup>9</sup> ten bales of mermaid silk,<sup>10</sup> and a jade belt with lustrous pearls. Today you’ll enjoy the reunion of husband and wife, mum and son.”



After Guangrui had given thanks repeatedly, the Dragon King ordered a Nature spirit to escort his body to the mouth of the river and there to return his soul. The Nature spirit followed the order and left. Lady Yin having wept for some time for her husband, would have killed herself again by plunging into the water if Xuanzang had not desperately held on to her. They were struggling pitifully when they saw a dead body floating toward the river bank. The lady hurriedly went forward to look at it. Recognising it as her husband's body, she burst into even louder wailing. As the other people gathered around to look, they suddenly saw Guangrui unclasping his fists and stretching his legs. The entire body began to stir, and in a moment he clambered up to the bank and sat down, to the infinite amazement of everyone. Guangrui opened his eyes and saw Lady Yin, the chief minister Yin, his dad-in-law, and a youthful monk, all weeping around him. "Why're you all here?" said Guangrui. "It all began," said Lady Yin, "when you're beaten to death by bandits. Afterwards your unworthy wife gave birth to this son who is fortunate enough to have been brought up by the abbot of the Gold Mountain Temple. The abbot sent him to meet me, and I told him to go seek his maternal grandpa. When dad heard this, he made it known to the court and led troops here to arrest the bandits. Just now we took out the culprit's liver and heart live to offer to you as libations but I'd like to know how my husband's soul is able to return to give him life." Guangrui said, "That's all on account of our buying the golden carp, when you and I were staying at the Inn of Ten Thousand Flowers. I released that carp, not knowing that it was none other than the Dragon King of this place. When the bandits pushed me into the river afterward, he was the one who came to my rescue. Just now he was also the one who gave me back my soul as well as many precious gifts that I've here with me. I never even knew that you had given birth to this boy, and I'm grateful that my dad-in-law has avenged me. Indeed, bitterness has passed and sweetness has come! What unsurpassable joy!" When the various officials heard about this, they all came to tender their congratulations. The chief minister then ordered a great banquet to thank his subordinates, after which the troops and horses on the very same day began their march homeward. When they came to the Inn of Ten Thousand Flowers, the chief minister gave order to pitch camp. Guangrui went with Xuanzang to the Inn of Liu to seek the grandma who happened to have dreamed the night before that a withered tree had blossomed. Magpies behind her house were chattering incessantly as well. She thought to herself, "Could it be that my grandson is coming?" Before she had finished talking to herself, dad and son arrived together. The youthful monk pointed to her and said, "Isn't this my grandma?" When Guangrui saw his aged mum, he saluted in haste; mum and son embraced and wept without restraint for a while. After recounting to each other what had happened, they paid the innkeeper his bill and set out again for the capital. When they reached the chief minister's residence, Guangrui, his wife, and his mum all went to greet the chief minister's wife who was overjoyed. She ordered her servants to prepare a huge banquet to celebrate the occasion. The chief minister said, "This banquet today may be named the Festival of Reunion, for truly our whole family is rejoicing." Early the next morning, the Tang emperor held court, during which time the chief minister Yin left the ranks to give a careful report on what had taken place. He also recommended that a talent like Guangrui's be used in some important capacity. The Tang emperor approved the memorial, and ordered that Chen E be promoted to Sub-chancellor of the Grand Secretariat so that he could accompany the court and carry out its policies. Xuanzang, determined to follow the way of Zen, was sent to practice austerities at the Temple of Infinite Blessing. Sometime after this, Lady Yin calmly committed suicide after all, and Xuanzang went back to the Gold Mountain Temple to repay the kindness of abbot Faming.

010

**The foolish schemes of the old Dragon King transgress Heaven's decrees; the letter of Prime Minister Wei seeks help from an official of the dead**

Guangrui is serving in his post and Xuanzang practicing austerities 2 worthies who lived on the banks of the river Jing outside the city of Chang'an: an angler by the name of Zhang Shao and a woodman by the name of Li Ding.<sup>1</sup> The 2 of them were scholars who had passed no official examination, mountain folks who knew how to read. One day in the city of Chang'an, after they had sold the wood on the one's back and the carp in the other's basket, they went into a small inn and drank until they were slightly tipsy. Each carrying a bottle, they followed the bank of the Jing River and walked slowly back. "Brother Li," said Zhang Shao, "in my opinion those who strive for fame will lose their lives on account of fame; those who live in quest of fortune will perish because of riches; those who've titles sleep embracing a tiger; and those who receive official favours walk with snakes in their sleeves. When you think of it, their lives can't compare with our carefree existence, close to the Blue Mountains and fair waters. We cherish poverty and pass our days without having to quarrel with fate."

"Brother Zhang," said Li Ding, "there's a great deal of truth in what you say. But your fair waters can't match my blue mountains."

"On the contrary," said Zhang Shao, "your blue mountains can't match my fair waters in testimony of which I offer a poem: *Butterflies Enamoured of Flowers* that says:

*In a small boat over ten thousand miles of misty waves I lean to the silent, single sail, circled by sounds of the mermaid-fish.  
My mind cleansed, my care purged, here lacks wealth or fame; leisurely I pick stems of bulrushes and reeds.  
Counting the seagulls is pleasure to be told!  
At willowed banks and reed-ed bays my wife and son join my joyous laugh.  
I sleep most soundly as wind and wave recede; no shame, no glory, and no misery."*

Li Ding said, "Your fair waters aren't as good as my blue mountains. I've also as testimony stanzas to the poem of *Butterflies Enamoured of Flowers* that says:

*At a dense forest's pine-seeded corner I hear, wordless, the oriole – its deft tongue's a poetic pipe.  
Pale reds and bright greens announce the warmth of spring; summer comes abruptly; so passes time.  
Then autumn arrives (for it's an easy change) with fragrant golden flowers most worthy of our joy; and cold winter descends, swift as a finger snaps.  
Ruled by no one, I'm free in all four climes."*

The angler said, "Your blue mountains aren't as good as my fair waters that offer me some fine things to enjoy. As testimony I've here stanzas to the poem of *The Partridge Sky*:

*The fairy land cloud and water do suffice: boat adrift, oars accumbent – this is my home.  
I split fishes live and cook green turtles; I steam purple crabs and boil red shrimps.  
Green reed-shoots, Water-plant sprouts; better still the 'chicken heads,' the Walter caltrops, lotus roots, old or young, the tender celery leaves, arrowheads, white caltrops, and niaoying flowers."*

The woodman said, "Your fair waters are not as good as my blue mountains that offer me some fine things to enjoy. As testimony I too have stanzas to the poem of *The Partridge Sky*:

*On tall, craggy peaks that touch heaven's edge a grass house, a straw hut would make up my home.  
Cured fowls, smoked geese surpass turtles or crabs; hares, antelopes, and deer best fishes or shrimps.  
The scented chun leaves; the yellow Lian sprouts; 'bamboo shoots and mountain tea are even better!  
Purple plums, red peaches, prunes, apricots ripe, sweet pears, sour dates, and cassia flowers."*

The angler said, "Your blue mountains are truly not as good as my fair waters. I've another stanzas to the poem of *The Heavenly Mortal*:

*One leaf-like skiff goes wherever I choose to stay.  
I fear not ten thousand folds of wave or mist.  
I drop hooks and cast nets to catch fresh fish: with no sauce or fat, it's tastier yet.  
Old wife and young son complete my home.  
When fishes are plenty, I leave for Chang'an marts and barter them for juice I drink till drunk.  
A coir-coat shrouds me, on autumnal stream I lie; snoring, asleep, no fret or care – I love not the glory or the pomp of man."*

The woodman said, "Your fair waters aren't still as good as my blue mountains. I've a poem to the verses of *The Heavenly Mortal* too:

*A few straw houses built beneath a hill.  
Pines, orchids, plums, bamboos – lovable all!  
Passing groves, climbing mountains, I seek dried woods.  
With none to chide, I sell as I wish: how much, how little, depends on my yield.  
I use the cash to buy juice as I please.  
Earthen crocks, clay flagons – both put me at ease.  
Sodden with juice, in the pine shade I lie: no anxious thoughts; no gain or loss; no care for this world's failure or success."*

The angler said, "Brother Li, your mountain life is not as pleasing as my livelihood on the waters. As testimony, I've a stanzas to the poem of *Moon Over West River*:

*Red smart-weeds' thick blooms glow in moonlight; 'yellow rush-leaves tousled, wind-shaken.  
The blue sky, clean and distant, in empty Chu River: drawing my lines, I stir a deep pool of stars.  
In rank and file big fishes enter the net; teams of tiny perches swallow the hooks.  
Their taste is special when they're caught and cooked.  
My laughter presides over rivers and lakes."*

The woodman says, "Brother Zhang, your life on the waters isn't as pleasing as my livelihood in the mountains. As testimony, I've also a stanzas to the poem of *Moon over West River*:

*Dead leaves, parched creepers choking the road; snapped poles, aged bamboos crowding the hill; dried tendrils and sedges in dishevelled growth I break and take; my ropes truss the load.  
Willow trunks hollowed by insects, pine branches clipped off by wind, I gather and stockpile, ready for winter's cold.  
Change them for juice or cash as I wish."*

The angler said, "Though your life in the mountains isn't bad, it isn't still as charming and graceful as mine is on the fair waters. As testimony, I've a stanzas to the poem of *Mortal by the River*:

*Falling tide moves my one boat away; I rest my oars, my poem comes with the night.  
The coir coat, the waning moon – how charming they are!  
No seagull darts up from fright as rosy clouds spread through the sky.  
I sleep without care at reed-ed isles, still snoozing when the sun is high.  
I work after my own plans and desires.  
Vassals in cold nights tending court could theirs match my pleasure and peace?"*

The woodman said, "The charm and grace of your fair waters cannot be compared with those of my blue mountains. I've a testimony to the verses of *Mortal by the River* too:

*I walk autumn's frosty paths dragging my axe; in night's cool I pole back my load, stranger still with temples stuck with flowers.  
I push clouds to find my way out; moon-stuck I call open my gate.  
Rustic wife and young son greet me with smiles; on straw bed and wooden pillow I lie.  
Steamed pears and cooked millet are soon prepared.  
The um's brew newly mellowed will add to my secret joys."*

The angler said, "All these things in our poems have to do with our livelihood, the occupations with which we support ourselves. But your life not as good as those leisurely moments of mine for which I've as testimony a regulated poem. The poem says:

*Idly I watch the blue sky's white cranes fly.  
My boat stops stream-side, my door's half-closed.  
By the sail my son's taught to knot fishing threads; rowing stops, I join my wife to dry the nets.  
My mind is still: thus I know the water's calm.  
My self's secure: hence I feel the wind is light.  
I freely don my green coir and bamboo hat: that beats wearing a robe with purple sash."*

The woodman said, "Your leisurely moments aren't as good as mine for which I've also a regulated poem as a testimony. The poem says:

*Idly I watch billows of white clouds fly or sit in my thatched hut's closed bamboo gates.  
I open leisurely books to teach my son; at times I face guests to play circling chess.<sup>6</sup>  
My cane strolls with my poems through floral paths; aroused, I climb green mountains, lute in hand.  
Straw sandals, hemp sashes, and coarse cloth quilts all beat silk garments when your heart is free!"*

Zhang Shao said, “Li Ding, the two of us indeed are *lucky to have light poems to amuse us. We don’t need castanets or flasks of gold.* <sup>7</sup>But the poems we’ve recited thus far are occasional pieces, hardly anything unusual. Why don’t we attempt a long poem in the linking-verse manner<sup>8</sup> and see how fares the conversation between the angler and the woodman?”

Li Ding said, “That’s a marvellous proposal, Brother Zhang! Please begin.”

*My boat rests on the green water’s mist and wave.<sup>9</sup>  
My home’s deep in mountains and open plains.  
I love the streams and bridges as spring tide swells; I care for ridges veiled by the clouds of dawn.  
My fresh carps from Long-men are often cooked; <sup>10</sup> dried woods, worm-rotted, are daily burnt.  
Nets of many kinds will support my age.  
Both pole and rope will see me to the end.  
I lie in a skiff and watch wild geese fly; I sprawl on grassy paths when wild swans cry.  
I’ve no stake in fields of mouth and tongue; through seas of scandal I’ve not made my way.  
Hung-dried by the stream my net’s like brocade; polished new on rocks, my axe shows a fine blade.  
Beneath autumn’s moon I oft fish alone; in spring hills all quiet I meet no one.  
Fishes are changed for juice for me and wife to drink; firewood is used to buy a bottle for my son.  
I recite and freely pour on my heart’s desire; in poems and sighs there’s none to restrain me.  
I call fellow boatmen to come as brothers; with friends we join the codgers of the wilds.  
We make rules, play games, and exchange the cups; break words, remake them when we pass the mugs.  
Cooked shrimps, boiled crabs are my daily feasts; I’m daily fed by smoked fowls and fried ducks.  
My unlettered wife makes tea languidly; mountain wife cooks rice most leisurely.  
When dawn comes, I lift my staff to stir the waves; at sunrise I pole my wood to cross big roads.  
I don coir coat after rain to catch live carps; windblown I wield my axe to cut dried pines.  
Hiding tracks to flee the world, I’m like a fool; blotting name and surname, I play deaf and dumb.*

Zhang Shao said, “Brother Li, just now I presumed to take the lead and began with the first line of the poem. Why don’t you begin this time and I’ll follow you.”

*“A rustic who feigns to be romantic; an oldie taking pride in streams and lakes.  
My lot’s leisure, I seek laxity and ease.  
Shunning talk and gossip, I love my peace.  
In moonlit nights I sleep in safe straw huts; when sky dims I’m draped with light coir cape.  
I befriend with ardour both pines and plums; I’m pleased to mingle with egrets and gulls.  
My mind has no plans for fortune or fame; ears are deaf to the din of spear and drum.  
At any time I’d pour my fragrant juice; day’s three meals are soups of leafy greens.  
My living rests on two bundles of wood; trade’s my pole fit with hooks and lines.  
I call our young son to sharpen my axe; I tell my small rogue he should mend our nets.  
Spring comes, I love to watch the willows green; warm days gladden the sight of rushes and reeds.  
To flee summer’s heat I plant new bamboos; I pick young lotus to cool myself in June.  
When Frost Descends the fatted fowls are slain; by Double Ninth<sup>11</sup> I’d cook the roe-filled crabs.  
I sleep deep in winter though the sun’s high; when the sky’s tall and hazy, I’d not fry!  
Throughout the year I roam free in the hills; in all four climes I sail the lakes at will.  
Gathering wood I own the mortals’ feel; dropping my rod, I sport no worldly form.  
My door’s wild blossoms are fragrant and bright; stem’s green water flows calm and serene.  
Content, I seek not the Three Dukes’ seats.<sup>12</sup>  
Like a ten-mile city my nature’s firm.  
Cities, though tall, must resist a siege; dukes though of high rank, must the summon heed.  
Delight in hills and streams is truly rare.  
Thank Heaven, Earth, and let’s thank the gods!”*

The 2 of them thus recited poems and composed linking-verses. Arriving at the place where their ways parted, they saluted to take leave of each other. “Elder Brother Li,” said Zhang Shao, “take care as you go on your way. When you climb the mountains, be wary of the tiger. If you’re harmed, I’d find *one friend missing on the street tomorrow* as the saying goes.”

When Li Ding heard these words, he grew very angry saying, “What a scoundrel you’re! Good friends would even die for each other! But you, why do you say such unlucky things to me? If I’m to be harmed by a tiger, your boat will surely capsize in the river.”

“I’ll never capsize my boat in the river,” said Zhang Shao.

Li Ding said, “As *there’re unexpected storms in the sky so there’s sudden weal or woe with man.* <sup>13</sup>What makes you so sure that you’ll not have an accident?”

“Elder Brother Li,” said Zhang Shao, “you say this because you’ve no idea what may befall you in your business whereas I can predict what’ll happen in my kind of business and I assure you that I’ll have no accident.”

“The kind of living you pick up on the waters,” said Li Ding, “is an exceedingly treacherous business. You’ve to take chances all the time. How can you be so certain about your future?”

“Here’s something you don’t know about,” said Zhang Shao. “In this city of Chang’an, there’s a fortune teller who plies his trade on the West Gate Street. Every day I give him a golden carp as a present and he consults the sticks in his sleeve for me. I follow his instructions when I lower my nets, and I’ve never missed in a hundred times. Today I went again to buy his prediction; he told me to set my nets at the east bend of the Jing River and to cast my line from the west bank. I know I’ll come back with a fine catch of fishes and shrimps. When I go up to the city tomorrow, I’ll sell my catch and buy some juice, and then I’ll get together with you again, old brother.”

The two men then parted. There is however, a proverb: “What’s said on the road is heard in the grass.”

For it happened that a Nature spirit on patrol in the Jing River overheard the part of the conversation about not having missed a hundred times. He dashed back to the Water Crystal Palace and hastily reported to the Dragon King, shouting, “Disaster! Disaster!”

“What sort of disaster?” asked the Dragon King.

“Your subject,” said the Nature spirit, “was patrolling the river and overheard a conversation between a woodman and an angler. Before they parted, they said something terrible. According to the angler, there is a fortune teller on West Gate Street in the city of Chang’an who is most accurate in his calculations. Every day the angler gives him a carp, and he then consults the sticks in his sleeve with the result that the angler has not missed once in a hundred times when he casts his line! If such accurate calculations continue, will not all our water kin be exterminated? Where’ll you find any more inhabitants for the watery region who will toss and leap in the waves to enhance the majesty of the Great King?”

The Dragon King became so angry that he wanted to take the sword and go at once up to Chang’an to slay the fortune teller. But his dragon sons and grandsons, the shrimp and crab ministers, the Samli counsellor, the perch Subdirector of the Minor Court, and the carp President of the Board of Civil Office all came from the side and said to him, “Let the Great King restrain his anger. The proverb says, ‘Don’t believe everything you hear.’ If the Great King goes forth like this, the clouds will accompany you and the rains will follow you. We fear that the people of Chang’an will be terrified and Heaven will be offended. Since the Great King’s the power to appear or disappear suddenly and to transform into many shapes and sizes, let him change into a scholar. Then go to the city of Chang’an and investigate the matter. If there’s indeed such a person, you can slay him without delay; but if there’s no such person, there’s no need to harm innocent people.”

The Dragon King accepted their suggestion; he abandoned his sword and dismissed the clouds and the rains. Reaching the river bank, he shook his body and changed into a white-robed scholar, truly with *features most virile, a stature towering; a stride most stately – so orderly and firm. His speech exalts Kong and Meng; his manner embodies Zhou and Wen.* <sup>14</sup>*He wears a silk robe of the colour of jade; his casual head-wrap’s shaped like the letter one.* <sup>15</sup>Coming out of the water, the Dragon King strode to the West Gate Street in the city of Chang’an. There he found a noisy crowd surrounding someone who was saying in a lofty and self-assured manner, “Those born under the Dragon will follow their fate; those under the Tiger will collide with their physiognomies. The branches Yin, Chen, Si, and Hai may be said to fit into the grand scheme but I fear your birthday may clash with the Planet Jupiter.”

When the Dragon King heard this, he knew that he had come upon the fortune-teller’s place. Walking up to it and pushing the people apart, he peered inside to see *4 walls of exquisite writings; a room full of brocaded paintings; smoke unending from the treasure duck; <sup>17</sup>and such pure water in a porcelain vase. On both sides are mounted Wang Wei’s paintings; high above his seat hangs the Guigu form.* <sup>18</sup>*The ink slab from Duanxi, <sup>19</sup>the golden smoke ink, both match the great brush of frostiest hair; the crystal balls, Guo Pu’s numbers, <sup>20</sup>neatly face new classics of soothsaying. He knows the hexagrams well; has mastered the 8 trigrams; perceives the laws of Heaven and Earth; discerns the ways of demons and gods. 1 tray before him fixes the cosmic hours; his mind clearly orders all planets and stars. Truly those things to come and those things past he beholds as in a mirror; which house will rise and which will fall?*

*He foresees like a god. He knows evil and decrees the good; prescribes death and predicts life. His pronouncements quicken the wind and rain; brush alarms both spirits and gods. His shop sign has letters to declare his name; this divine diviner, Yuan Shoucheng.* He was actually the uncle of Yuan Tiankang, president of the Imperial Board of Astronomy in the present dynasty. The gentle man was truly a man of extraordinary appearance and elegant features; his name was known throughout the great country and his art was considered the highest in Chang’an. The Dragon King went inside the door and met the Master after exchanging greetings, he was invited to take the seat of honour while a boy served him tea. The Master asked, “What’d you like to know?”

The Dragon King said, “Please forecast the weather.”

The Master consulted his sticks and made his judgement: “*Clouds hide the hilltop and fog shrouds the tree. The rain you’d divine tomorrow you’ll see.*”

“At what hour it’ll rain tomorrow and how much rain there’ll be?” asked the Dragon King.

“At the hour of the Dragon the clouds will gather,” said the Master, “and thunder will be heard at the hour of the Serpent. Rain will come at the hour of the Horse and reach its limit at the hour of the Sheep. <sup>21</sup> There’ll be altogether three feet, three inches, and forty-eight drops of rain.”

“You’d better not be joking now,” said the Dragon King, laughing. “If it rains tomorrow and if it is in accordance with the time and the amount you prophesied, I’ll present you with fifty taels of gold as my thanks. But if it doesn’t rain or the amount and the hours are incorrect, I tell you truly that I’ll come and break your front door to pieces and tear down your shop sign. You’ll be chased out of Chang’an at once so that you may no longer seduce the multitude.”

“You may certainly do that,” said the Master amiably. “Goodbye for now. Please come again tomorrow after the rain.”

The Dragon King took leave and returned to his water residence. He was received by various aquatic deities who asked, “How’s the Great King’s visit to the soothsayer?”

“Yes, yes, yes,” said the Dragon King, “there’s indeed such a person but he’s a garrulous fortune-teller. I asked him when it’d rain and he said tomorrow; I asked him again about the time and the amount and he told me that clouds would gather at the hour of the Dragon, thunder would be heard at the hour of the Serpent and that rain would come at the hour of the Horse and reach its limit at the hour of the Sheep. Altogether there’d be three feet, three inches, and forty-eight drops of water. I made a wager with him: if it’s as he said, I’ll reward him with fifty taels of gold. If there’s the slightest error, I’ll break down his shop and chase him away so that he’ll not be permitted to seduce the multitude at Chang’an.”

“The Great King’s the supreme commander of the eight rivers,” said the water kin, laughing, “the great Dragon Deity in charge of rain. Whether there’s going to be rain or not, only the Great King knows that. How dare he speak so foolishly? That soothsayer’s sure to lose!”

While the dragon sons and grandsons were laughing at the matter with the fish and crab officials, a voice was heard suddenly in mid-air announcing, “Dragon King of the Jing River, receive the imperial command.” They raised their heads to look and saw a golden-robed guardian holding the decree of the Jade Emperor and heading straight for the water residence. The Dragon King hastily straightened out his attire and burned incense to receive the decree. After he made his delivery, the guardian rose into the air and left. The Dragon King opened the decree that said:

*We bid the 8-Rivers Prince to call up thunder and rain; pour out tomorrow your grace to benefit Chang’an’s race.*

The instructions regarding the hours and the amount of rain written on the decree did not even differ in the slightest from the soothsayer’s prediction. So overwhelmed was the Dragon King that his spirit left him and his soul fled, and only after a while did he regain consciousness. He said to his water kinsmen, “There’s indeed an intelligent creature in the world of dust! How well he comprehends the laws of Heaven and Earth! I’m bound to lose to him!”

“Let the Great King calm himself,” said the samli counsellor. “Is it so difficult to get the better of the fortune-teller? Your subject here’s a little plan that will silence that fellow for good.”

The Dragon King asked, “What’s the plan?”

The counsellor said, “If the rain tomorrow misses the timing and the amount specified by a mere fraction, it’ll mean that his prediction is not accurate. Won’t you’ve won? What’s there to stop you then from tearing up his shop sign and putting him on the road?”

The Dragon King took his counsel and stopped worrying. The next day he ordered the Duke of Wind, the Lord of Thunder, the Boy of Clouds, and the Mum of Lightning to go with him to the sky above Chang’an. He waited until the hour of the Serpent before spreading the clouds, the hour of the Horse before letting loose the thunder, the hour of the Sheep before releasing the rain, and only by the hour of the Monkey did the rain stop.<sup>22</sup> There were only three feet and forty drops of water, since the times were altered by an hour and the amount was changed by three inches and eight drops. After the rain, the Dragon King dismissed his followers and came down from the clouds, transformed once again into a scholar dressed in white. He went to the West Gate Street and barged into Yuan Shoucheng’s shop. Without a word of explanation, he began to smash the shop sign, the brushes, and the ink slab to pieces. The Master however, sat on his chair and remained unmoved, so the Dragon King unhinged the door and threatened to hit him with it, crying, “You’re nothing but a bogus nun of good and evil, an imposter who deludes the minds of the people! Your predictions are incorrect; your words are patently false! What you told me about the time and quantity of today’s rain was utterly inaccurate, and yet you dare sit so smugly and so high on your seat? Leave here at once before you’re executed!” Still Yuan Shoucheng was not at all intimidated. He lifted up his head and laughed scornfully. “I’m not afraid!” he said. “Not in the least! I’m not guilty of death but I fear that you’ve committed a mortal crime. You can fool other people but you can’t fool me! I recognise you, all right: you’re not a white-robed scholar but the Dragon King of the Jing River. By altering the times and holding back the quantity of rain, you’ve disobeyed the decree of the Jade Emperor and transgressed the law of Heaven. On the dragon execution block you’ll not escape the knife! And here you’re, railing at me!”

When the Dragon King heard these words, his heart trembled and his hair stood on end. He dropped the door quickly, tidied his clothes, and knelt before the Master saying, “I beg the Master not to take offence. My previous words were spoken in jest; little did I realise that my prank would turn out to be such a serious crime. Now I’ve indeed transgressed the law of Heaven. What am I to do? I beseech the Master to save me. If you’ll not, I’ll never let you go!”

“I can’t save you,” said Shoucheng. “I can only point out to you what may be a way of life.”

“I’m willing to be instructed,” said the Dragon.

The Master said, “You’re to be executed tomorrow by the human judge, Wei Zheng, at the third quarter past the hour of noon. If you want to preserve your life, you must go quickly to plead your case before the present emperor Tang Taizong, for Wei Zheng is the prime minister before his throne. If you can win the emperor’s favour, you’ll be spared.”

Hearing this, the Dragon took leave with tears in his eyes. Soon the red sun sank down and the moon arose. See *smoke thickens on purple mountains as homing crows tire; travellers on distant journeys head for inns; young wild geese at fords rest on field and sand. The silver stream appears*<sup>23</sup> to hasten the time float. *<sup>24</sup>Lights fare in a lone village from dying flames: wind sweeps the burner to clear Daoist yard of smoke as man fades away in the butterfly dream. <sup>25</sup>The moon moves floral shadows up the garden’s rails. The stars are rife as water clocks strike; so swiftly the gloom deepens that it’s midnight.* The Dragon King of the Jing River did not even return to his water home; he waited in the air until it was about the hour of the Rat,<sup>26</sup> when he descended from the clouds and mists and came to the gate of the palace. At this time the Tang emperor was just having a dream about taking a walk outside the palace in the moonlight, beneath the shades of flowers. The Dragon suddenly assumed the form of a human being and went up to him. Kneeling, he cried out, “Your Majesty, save me, save me!”

“Who are you?” asked Taizong. “We’d be glad to save you.”

“Your Majesty is the true dragon,” said the Dragon King, “but I’m an accursed one. Because I’ve disobeyed the decree of Heaven, I’m to be executed by a worthy subject of Your Majesty, the human judge Wei Zheng. I’ve therefore come here to plead with you to save me.”

If Wei Zheng is to be the executioner,” said Taizong, “we can certainly save you. You may leave and not worry.” The Dragon King was delighted and left after expressing his gratitude. Taizong having awakened, was still turning over in his mind what he had dreamed. Soon it was 3/5<sup>th</sup> past the hour of the 5<sup>th</sup> watch and Taizong held court for his ministers, both civil and martial. See *smoke shrouding the phoenix arches; incense clouding the dragon domes; light shimmering as the silk screens move; clouds brushing the feather-trimmed flags;* <sup>27</sup>*rulers and lords harmonious as Yao and Shun; <sup>28</sup>rituals and poems solemn as Han’s and Zhou’s. The attendant lamps, the court-maiden fans show their colours in pairs; from peacock screens and unicorn halls light radiates everywhere. Three cheers for long life! A wish for reign everlasting! When a whip cracks 3 times, the caps and robes will salute the Crown. Brilliant palatial blooms, ended by Heaven’s scent; pliant bank willows, recited and praised by court poems. The screens of pearl, the screens of jade are drawn high by golden hooks: the dragon-phoenix fan, the mountain-river fan*<sup>29</sup> *rest on top of the royal carriage. The civil lords are noble and refined; the martial lords, strong and valiant. The imperial path divides the ranks: the vermilion court aligns the grades. The golden seal and purple sashes bearing the 3 signs*<sup>30</sup> *will last for millions of years as Heaven and Earth.* After the ministers had paid their homage, they all went back to standing in rows according to their rank. The Tang emperor opened his dragon eyes to look at them 1 by 1: among the civil officials were Fang Xuanling, Du Ruhui, Xu Shizhi, Xu Jingzong, Wang Guei; among the military officials were Ma Sanbao, Duan Zhixian, Yin Kaishan, Cheng Yaojin, Liu Hongzhi, Hu Jingde, and Qin Shubao. Each 1 of them was standing there in a most solemn manner but the Prime Minister Wei Zheng was to be seen nowhere. The Tang emperor asked Xu Shizhi to come forward and said to him, “We’d a strange dream last night: there was a man who paid homage to us calling himself the Dragon King of the Jing River. He said that he’d disobeyed the command of Heaven and was supposed to be executed by the human judge Wei Zheng. He implored us to save him and we gave our consent. Today only Wei Zheng’s absent from the ranks. Why’s that?”

“This dream may indeed come true,” answered Shizhi, “and Wei Zheng must be summoned to court immediately. Once he arrives, let Your Majesty keep him here for a whole day and not permit him to leave. After this day, the dragon in the dream will be saved.”

The Tang emperor was most delighted: he gave the order at once to have Wei Zheng summoned to court. We speak now of Prime Minister Wei Zheng who studied the movement of the stars and burned incense at his home that evening. He heard the cries of cranes in the air and saw there a Heavenly messenger holding the golden decree of the Jade Emperor that ordered him to execute in his dream the old dragon of the Jing River at precisely the third quarter past the noon hour. Having thanked the Heavenly grace, our prime minister prepared himself in his residence by bathing himself and abstaining from food; he was also sharpening his magic sword and exercising his spirit, and therefore he did not attend court. He was terribly flustered when he saw the royal officer on duty arriving with the summons. Not daring however, to disobey the emperor’s command, he had to dress quickly and follow the summons into court, respecting and asking for pardon before the throne. The Tang emperor said, “We pardoned indeed our worthy subject.” At that time the various ministers had not yet retired from the court, and only after Wei Zheng’s arrival was the curtain drawn up for the court’s dismissal. Wei Zheng alone was asked to remain; he rode the golden carriage with the emperor to enter the chamber for relaxation where he discussed with the emperor tactics for making the empire secure and other affairs of state. When it was just about midway between the hour of the Serpent and the hour of the Horse, the emperor asked the royal attendants to bring out a large chess set, saying, “We’ll have a game with our worthy subject.”

The various concubines took out the chessboard and set it on the imperial table. After expressing his gratitude, Wei Zheng set out to play chess with the Tang emperor, both of them moving the pieces step by step into positions. It was completely in accordance with the instruction of the *Classic of Chess*:

The way of chess exalts discipline and caution; the most powerful pieces should remain in the centre, the weakest ones at the flanks, and the less powerful ones at the corners. This is a familiar law of the chess player. The law says: “You’d rather lose a piece than an advantage. When you strike on the left, you must guard your right; when you attack in the rear, you must watch your front. Only when you’ve a secure front will you also have a rear and only if you’ve a secure rear will you maintain your front. The two ends can’t be separated, yet both must remain flexible, and not be encumbered. A broad formation shouldn’t be too loose while a tight position shouldn’t be constricted. Rather than clinging on to save a single piece, it’s better to sacrifice it in order to win; rather than moving without purpose, it’s better to remain stationary in order to be self-supportive. When your adversary outnumbered you, your first concern’s to survive; when you outnumber your adversary, you must strive to exploit your force. He who knows how to win won’t prolong his fight; he who’s a master of positions won’t engage in direct combat; he who knows how to fight won’t suffer defeat; and he who knows how to lose won’t panic. For chess begins with proper engagement but ends in unexpected victory. If your enemy’s bringing up his reinforcement even without being threatened, it’s a sign of his intention to attack; if he deserts a small piece without trying to save it, he may be stalking a bigger piece. If he moves in a casual manner, he’s a man without thoughts; response without thought’s the way to defeat. The *Classic of Poetry* says:

*Approach with extreme caution as if facing a deep canyon.*

Such is the meaning thereof. The poem says:

*The chessboard’s the earth; the pieces are the sky; the colours are light and dark as the whole universe.*

*When playing reaches that skilful, subtle stage boast and laugh with the old Mortal of Chess.*<sup>31</sup>

The 2 of them, emperor and subject played chess until ¼ past the noon hour but the game was not yet finished. Suddenly Wei Zheng put his head on the table and fell fast asleep. Taizong laughed and said, “Our worthy subject’s truly worn himself out for the state and exhausted his strength on behalf of the empire. He’s therefore fallen asleep in spite of himself.”

Taizong allowed him to sleep on and did not arouse him. In a little while, Wei Zheng awoke and saluted himself on the ground saying, “Your subject deserves ten thousand deaths! Your subject deserves ten thousand deaths! Just now I lost consciousness for no reason at all. I beg Your Majesty’s pardon for such insult against the emperor.”

“What insult’s there?” said Taizong. “Arise! Let’s forget the old game and start a new one instead.”

Wei Zheng expressed his gratitude. As he put his hand on a piece, a loud clamour was heard outside the gate. It was occasioned by the ministers Qin Shubao and Xu Mougong who arrived with a dragon head dripping with blood. Throwing it in front of the emperor they said, “Your Majesty, we’ve seen seas turn shallow and rivers run dry but a thing as strange as this we’ve never even heard of.” Taizong arose with Wei Zheng and said, “Where did this thing come from?”

“South of the Thousand-Step Corridor,” replied Shubao and Mougong, “at the crossroads, this dragon head fell from the clouds. Your lowly subjects dared’n withhold it from you.”

In alarm, the Tang emperor asked Wei Zheng, “What’s the meaning of this?” Turning to respect to him, Wei Zheng said, “This dragon’s executed just now by your subject in his dream.”

When the Tang emperor heard this, he was seized with fear and said, “When our worthy minister was sleeping, I saw no movement of body or limb and perceived no scimitar or sword. How’d you’ve executed this dragon?”

Wei Zheng replied, “My lord, although *my body’s before my master, I left Your Majesty in my dream; my body before my master faced the unfinished game with dim eyes fully closed; I left Your Majesty in my dream to ride the blessed cloud with spirit most eager and alert. That dragon on the dragon execution block’s bound up there by celestial hosts. Your subject said, ‘For breaking Heaven’s law, you’re worthy of death. Now by Heaven’s command, I end your wretched life.’ The dragon listened in grief; your subject bestirred his spirit; the dragon listened in grief, retrieving claws and scales to await his death; your subject bestirred his spirit, lifting robe and taking step to hold high his blade. With one loud crack the knife descended; and thus the head of the dragon fell from the sky.*”

When Taizong heard these words, he was filled with both sadness and delight. The delight was caused by his pride in having a minister as good as Wei Zheng. If he had worthies of this kind in his court, he thought, need he worry about the security of his empire? He was saddened however, by the fact that he had promised in his dream to save the dragon, and he had not anticipated that the creature would be killed in this manner. He had to force himself to give the order to Shubao that the dragon head be hung on display at the market, so that the populace of Chang’an might be informed. Meanwhile, he rewarded Wei Zheng, after which the various ministers dispersed. That night he returned to his palace in deep depression, for he kept remembering the dragon in the dream crying and begging for his life. Little did he expect that the turn of events would be such that the dragon still could not escape calamity. Having thought about the matter for a long time, he became physically and mentally drained. At about the hour of the second watch, the sound of weeping was heard outside the door of the palace, and Taizong became even more fearful. He was sleeping fitfully when he saw our Dragon King of the Jing River holding his head dripping with blood in his hand and crying in a loud voice: “Tang Taizong! Give me back my life! Give me back my life! Last night you’re full of promises to save me. Why did you order a human judge in the daytime to have me executed? Come out, come out! I’m going to argue this case with you before the King of the Underworld.”

He seized Taizong and would neither let go nor desist from his protestation. Taizong could not say a word; he could only struggle until perspiration covered his entire body. Just at the moment when it seemed that nothing could separate them, fragrant clouds and colourful mists appeared from the south. A Daoist priestess came forward and waved a willow twig. That headless dragon, still mourning and weeping, left at once toward the northwest. For this was none other than the Nun Guanyin who by the decree of God was seeking a scripture pilgrim in the Land of the East. She was staying in the temple of the local spirit at the city of Chang’an when she heard in the night the weeping of demons and the crying of spirits. So she came specially to drive the accursed dragon away and to rescue the emperor. That dragon went directly to the court of the Underworld to file suit. Taizong could only yell aloud when he awoke, “Ghost! Ghost!”

He so terrified the queens of 3 palaces, the concubines of 6 chambers, and the attending eunuchs that they remained sleepless for the entire night. Soon it was the 5<sup>th</sup> watch and all the officials of the court both civil and military were waiting for an audience outside the gate. They waited until dawn but the emperor did not appear, and every one of them became apprehensive and restless. Only after the sun was high in the sky did a proclamation come out saying, “We’re not feeling too well. The ministers are excused from court.”

5 or 6 days went by swiftly and the various officials became so anxious that they were about to enter the court without summons and inquire after the throne. Just then the queen mum gave the order to have the physician brought into the palace and so the multitude waited at the gate of the court for some news. In a little while, the physician came out and he was questioned about the emperor’s illness. “The pulse of His Majesty’s irregular,” said the physician, “for it’s weak as well as rapid. He blabbers about seeing ghosts. I also perceive that there’re ten movements and one rest but there’s no breath left in his viscera. I’m afraid that he’ll pass away within a week.”

When the various ministers heard this statement, they paled with fright. In this state of alarm, they again heard that Taizong had summoned Xu Mougong, Huguo Gong, and Yuchi Gong to appear before him. The three ministers hurried into the auxiliary palace where they saluted themselves. Speaking sombrely and with great effort, Taizong said, “My worthy subjects since the age of nineteen I’ve been leading my army in expeditions to the four corners of the Earth. I’ve experienced much hardship throughout the years but I’ve ever encountered no kind of strange or weird thing. This day however, I’ve seen ghosts!”

“When you established your empire,” said Yuchi Gong, “you’d to kill countless people. Why’d you fear ghosts?”

“You may not believe it,” said Taizong, “but outside this bedroom of mine at night, there’re bricks thrown and spirits screaming to a degree that’s truly unmanageable. In the daytime it’s not too bad but it’s intolerable at night!”

“Let Your Majesty be relieved,” said Shubao, “for this evening your subject and Jingde<sup>32</sup> will stand guard at the palace gate. We’ll see what sort of ghostly business there’s.”

Taizong agreed to the proposal and Mougong and the other ministers retired after expressing their gratitude. That evening the 2 ministers in full battle dress and holding golden bludgeon and battle-axe stood guard outside the palace gate. *Dear generals! Look how they are attired: they wore on their heads bright glimmering golden helmets and on their bodies cuirasses of dragon scales. Their jewelled breastplates glow like hallowed clouds: with lion knots tightly drawn and silk sashes newly spun. This one had phoenix eyes facing the sky to frighten the stars: the other had brown eyes glowering like lightning and the shining moon. They were once warriors of the greatest merit; but now they’ve become for all time the guardians of the gates in all ages the protectors of the home.* <sup>33</sup>The 2 generals stood beside the door for the entire night and did not see the slightest disturbance. That night Taizong rested peacefully in the palace; when morning came he summoned the 2 generals before him and thanked them profusely saying, “Since falling ill, I’ve been unable to sleep for days and only last night did I manage to get some rest because of your presence. Let our worthy ministers retire now for some rest so that we may count on your protect-ion once again at night.”

The 2 generals left after expressing their gratitude and for the following 2 or 3 nights their standing guard brought continued peace. However, the royal appetite diminished and the illness became more severe. Taizong, moreover, could not bear to see the two generals overworked. So once again he called Shubao, Jingde, the ministers Du and Fang into the palace saying to them, “Though I got some rest these past two days, I’ve imposed on the two generals the hardship of staying up all night. I wish to have portraits made of both of them by a skilled painter and have these pasted on the door so that the two generals will be spared any further labour. How about it?”

The various ministers obeyed; they selected 2 portrait painters who made pictures of the 2 generals in their proper battle attire. The portraits were then mounted near the gate and no incident occurred during the night. So it was for 2 or 3 days until the loud rattling of bricks and tiles was again heard at the rear gate of the palace. At dawn the emperor called together the various ministers, saying to them, “For the past few days there have been no incidents at the front of the palace happily but last night the noises at the backdoor were such that they nearly frightened me to death.”

Mougong stepped forward and said, “The disturbances at the front door were driven off by Jingde and Shubao. If there’s disturbance at the rear gate, then Wei Zheng ought to stand guard.” Taizong approved the suggestion and ordered Wei Zheng to guard the rear door that night. Accepting the charge, Wei donned his full court regalia that evening; holding the sword with which he had slain the dragon, he stood at attention before the rear gate of the palace. What splendid heroic stature! Look how he is attired: *green satin turban swaths his brow: the silk robe’s jade belt is waist-hung; windblown, craned-down sleeves fly like drifting snow. He bests Lü and Shu’s divine looks.* <sup>34</sup>*His feet wear black boots most supple; hands hold a blade sharp and fierce. With glaring eyes he stared at all 4 sides. Which deviant god dares approach?*<sup>35</sup>

A whole night went by and no ghost appeared. But though there were no incidents at either the front or the rear gate, the emperor’s condition worsened. 1 day the queen mum sent for all the ministers to discuss funeral arrangements. Taizong himself also summoned Xu Mougong to his bedside to entrust to him the affairs of state, committing the crown prince to the minister’s care as Liu Bei did to Zhuge Liang. <sup>36</sup>When he had finished speaking, he bathed and changed his garments, waiting for his time to come. Wei Zheng then stepped out from the side and tugged the royal garment with his hand saying, “Let Your Majesty be relieved. Your subject knows something that’ll guarantee long life for Your Majesty.”

“My illness’s,” said Taizong, “reached the irremediable stage; my life’s in danger. How can you preserve it?”

“Your subject’s a letter here,” said Wei, “that I submit to Your Majesty to take with you to Hell and give to the Judge of the Underworld, Jue.”

“Who’s Cui Jue?” asked Taizong.

“Cui Jue’s,” said Wei, “the subject of the deceased emperor, your dad: at first he’s the district magistrate of Cizhou and subsequently he’s promoted to vice president of the Board of Rites. When he’s alive, he’s an intimate friend and sworn brother of your subject. Now that he’s dead, he’s become a judge in the capital of the Underworld having in his charge the chronicles of life and death in the region of darkness. He meets with me frequently however, in my dreams. If you go there presently and hand this letter to him, he’ll certainly remember his obligation toward your lowly subject and allow Your Majesty to return here. Surely your soul will return to the human world and royal countenance will once more grace the capital.” When Taizong heard these words, he took the letter in his hands and put it in his sleeve; with that he closed his eyes and died. Those queens and concubines from 3 palaces and 6 chambers, the crown prince and the 2 rows of civil and military officials all put on their mourning garb to mourn him as the imperial coffin lay in state at the Hall of the White Tiger.

**011**

**Having toured the Underworld, Taizong returns to life; Having presented melons and fruits, Liu Quan marries again**

The poem says: <sup>1</sup>

*A century passes by like flowing streams; like froth and foam a lifetime's work now seems.  
Yesterday faces had a peach's glow; today the temples float up flakes of snow.  
Termites disband – illusion then you'll learn!<sup>2</sup>  
Cuckoos call<sup>3</sup> gravely for your early return.  
Secret good works will always life prolong.  
Virtue's not needy for Heaven's care's strong.*

Taizong whose soul drifted out of the Tower of 5 Phoenixes. Everything was blurred and indistinct. It seemed to him that a company of imperial guardsmen was inviting him to a hunting party to which Taizong gladly gave his consent and went off with them. They had journeyed for a long time when suddenly all the men and horses vanished from sight. He was left alone, walking the deserted fields and desolate plains. As he anxiously tried to find his way back, he heard someone from beyond calling in a loud voice: “Great Tang Emperor, come over here! Come over here!” Taizong heard this and looked up. He saw that the man had *a black gauze cap on his head; rhinoceros horns around his waist.* <sup>4</sup>*His head's black gauze hat dangled pliant bands: waist's rhino horns displayed plates of gold. He held an ivory plaque sheathed in hallowed mist; he wore a silk robe circled by holy light. His feet put on a pair of white-soled boots for treading cloud and climbing fog; he grasped by his heart a book of life and death that determined one's fate. His hair, luxuriant, flew above his ears: beard fluttered and exercised around his jaws. He was once a prime minister of Tang: now he judged cases to serve Yama King.* Taizong walked toward him and the man kneeling at the side of the road, said to him, “Your Majesty, please pardon your subject for neglecting to meet you at a greater distance.”

“Who’re you,” asked Taizong, “and for what reason did you come to meet me?”

The man said, “Half a month ago your lowly subject met in the Halls of Darkness the Dragon Ghost of the Jing River who’s filing suit against Your Majesty for having him executed after promising to save him. So the great king Qinguang of the first chamber immediately sent demon messengers to arrest and bring you to trial before the Three Tribunes. Your subject learned of this and therefore came here to receive you. I didn’t expect to come late today and I beg you to forgive me.”

“What’s your name,” said Taizong, “and rank?”

“When your lowly subject’s alive,” said that man, “he served on Earth before the previous emperor as the district magistrate of Cizhou. Afterwards I was appointed vice president of the Board of Rites. My surname’s Cui and my given name is Jue. In the Region of Darkness I hold a judgeship in the Capital of Death.”

Taizong was very glad; he went forward and held out his royal hands to raise the man up saying, “I’m sorry to have inconvenienced you. Wei Zheng who serves before my throne’s a letter for you. I’m glad that we’ve a chance to meet here.” The judge expressed his gratitude and asked where the letter was. Taizong took it out of his sleeve and handed it over to Cui Jue who received it, saluting, and then opened it and read:

*Your unworthily beloved brother Wei Zheng sends with saluted head this letter to the Great Judge, my sworn brother the Honourable Mr. Cui. I recall our former goodly society and both your voice and countenance seem to be present with me. Several years have hastened by since I last heard your lofty discourse. I'd only prepare a few vegetables and fruits to offer to you as sacrifices during the festive times of the year though I don't know whether you've enjoyed them or not. I'm grateful however, that you've not forgotten me, and revealed to me in my dreams that you've, my elder brother, ascended to an even higher office. Unfortunately the worlds of Light and Darkness are separated by a gulf wide as the Heavens, so that we can't meet face to face. The reason that I'm writing you now is the sudden demise of my emperor, the accomplished Taizong whose case I suppose, will be reviewed by the Three Tribunes so that he'll certainly be given the opportunity to meet you. I earnestly beseech you to remember our friendship while you're living and grant me the small favour of allowing His Majesty to return to life. This will be a very great favour to me for which I thank you once more. After reading the letter, the judge said with great delight, “The execution of the old dragon the other day by the human judge Wei’s already known to your subject who greatly admires him for this deed. I’m moreover indebted to him for looking after my children. Since he has written such a letter now, Your Majesty need have no further concern. Your lowly subject will make certain that you’ll be returned to life to ascend once more your throne of jade.”*

Taizong thanked him. As the 2 of them were speaking, they saw in the distance 2 young boys in blue robes holding banners and flags and calling out, “The King of the Underworld’s an invitation for you.” Taizong went forward with Judge Cui and the two boys. He suddenly saw a huge city, and on a large plaque above the city gate was the inscription in gold letters:

*The Region of Darkness, the Gate of Spirits*

Waving the banners, the blue robes led Taizong into the city. As they walked along, they saw at the side of the street the emperor’s predecessor Li Yuan, his elder brother Jiancheng, and his deceased brother Yuanji who came toward them, shouting, “Here comes Shimin! Here comes Shimin!” <sup>5</sup>The brothers clutched at Taizong and began beating him and threatening vengeance. Having no place to dodge, the emperor fell into their clutch; and only when Judge Cui called a blue-faced, hook-tusked demon to drive them away could he escape and continue his journey. They had travelled no more than a few miles when they arrived at a towering edifice with green tiles. This building was truly magnificent. See *lightly 10000 folds of coloured mists pile high; dimly 1000 strands of crimson brume appear. Heads of wild beasts rear up from the eaves aglow. Pairs of lambent roof tiles rise in tiers of 5. Rows of red-gold nails bore deeply into doors; crosswise, slabs of white jade make up the rails. Windows near the lights release morning smoke. The screens, the curtains, flash like fiery bolts. High-rising towers reach to the azure sky. Criss-crossing hallways join the treasure rooms. Fragrance from beast-shaped tripods line royal robes; scarlet silk lanterns brighten the portals' leaves. On the left hordes of fierce Bull-heads stand; on the right gruesome Horse-faces line up. Gold placards turn to greet the ghosts of the dead; white silk descends to lead the deceased souls. It bears this name: The Central Gate of Hell, the Darkness Hall of the Princes of Hades.* As Taizong was looking at the place, there came from within the tinkling of girdle jade, the mysterious fragrance of divine incense, and 2 pairs of torch candles followed by the 10 Kings of the Underworld coming down the steps. The 10 Kings were: King Qinguang, King of the Beginning River, King of the Poem Emperor, King of Avenging Ministers, King Yama, King of Equal Ranks, King of the Tai Mountain, King of City Markets, King of Complete Change, and King of the Turning Wheel. Coming out of the Treasure Hall of Darkness, they saluted to receive Taizong who feigning modesty, declined to lead the way. The 10 Kings said, “Your Majesty’s the emperor of men in the World of Light whereas we’re but the kings of spirits in the World of Darkness. Such are indeed our appointed stations so why should you defer to us?”

“I’m afraid that I’ve offended all of you,” said Taizong, “so how can I dare to speak of observing the etiquette of ghosts and men, Light and Darkness?”

Only after much protestation did Taizong proceed into the Hall of Darkness. After he had greeted the 10 Kings properly they sat down according to the places assigned to hosts and guests. After a little while, King Qinguang folded his hands in front of him and came forward saying, “The Dragon Spirit of the Jing River accuses Your Majesty of having him slain after promising to save him. Why?”

“I did promise him that nothing would happen,” said Taizong, “when the old dragon appealed to me in my dream at night. He’s guilty, you know and condemned to be executed by the human judge Wei Zheng. It’s to save him that I invited Wei Zheng to play chess with me, not anticipating that Wei Zheng could’ve performed the execution in his dream! That’s indeed a miraculous stratagem devised by the human judge and after all, the dragon’s also guilty of a mortal offence. I fail to see how I’m to blame.”

When the 10 Kings heard these words, they replied, saluting, “Even before that dragon’s born, it’s already written on the Book of Death held by the Star of South Pole that he’d be slain by a human judge. We’ve known this all along but the dragon lodged his complaint here and insisted that Your Majesty be brought down so that his case might be reviewed by the Three Tribunes. We’ve already sent him on his way to his next disciple through the Wheel of Transmigration. We regret however, that we’ve caused Your Majesty the inconvenience of this journey and beg your pardon for pressing you to come here.”

When they had finished speaking, they ordered the judge in charge of the Books of Life and Death to bring out the records quickly so that they could ascertain what the allotted time of the emperor was to be. Judge Cui went at once to his chamber and examined one by one the ages preordained for all the kings in the world that were inscribed in the books. Startled when he saw that the Great Tang Emperor Taizong of the South Jambūdvīpa Continent was destined to die in the thirteenth year of the period Zhenguan, he quickly dipped his big brush in thick ink and added two strokes<sup>6</sup> before presenting the book. The Ten Kings took one look and saw that “thirty-three years” was written beneath the name Taizong. They asked in alarm, “How long has it been since Your Majesty was enthroned?”

“It’s been thirteen years,” said Taizong.

“Your Majesty need have no worry,” said King Yama, “for you’ve still twenty years of life. Now that your case’s been clearly reviewed, we can send you back to the World of Light.”

When Taizong heard this, he saluted to express his gratitude as the Ten Kings ordered Judge Cui and Grand Marshal Chu to accompany him back to life. Taizong walked out of the Hall of Darkness and asked, saluting the 10 Kings once again, “What’s going to happen to those living in my palace?”

“Everyone’ll be safe,” said the 10 Kings, “except your younger sister. It appears that she’ll not live long.”

“When I return to the World of Light,” said Taizong, saluting again to thank them, “I’ve very little that I can present you as a token of my gratitude. Perhaps I can send you some melons or other kinds of fruit?”

Delighted, the Ten Kings said, “We’ve eastern and western melons here but we lack southern melons.”<sup>7</sup>

“The moment I get back,” said Taizong, “I’ll send you some.” They saluted to each other with hands folded, and parted. The marshal took the lead, holding a flag for guiding souls while Judge Cui followed behind to protect Taizong. They walked out of the Region of Darkness, and Taizong saw that it was not the same road. He asked the judge, “Are we going on the wrong way?”

“No,” said the judge, “for this is how it is in the Region of Darkness: there is away for you to come but there is no way out. Now we must send Your Majesty off from the region of the Wheel of Transmigration, so that you can make a tour of Hell as well as be sent on your way to disciple.” Taizong had little alternative but to follow their lead.

They had gone only a few miles when they came upon a tall mountain. Dark clouds touched the ground around it, and black mists shrouded the sky. “Mr. Cui,” said Taizong, “what mountain is this?” The judge said, “It’s the Mountain of Perpetual Shade in the Region of Darkness.”

“How can we go there?” asked Taizong fearfully.

“Your Majesty needn’t worry,” said the judge, “for your subjects here’re to guide you.”

Shaking and quaking, Taizong followed the 2 of them and ascended the slope. He raised his head to look around and saw that *its shape was both craggy and curved, its form was even more tortuous. Rugged like the Shu peaks; \*tall like the Lu summits; it was not a famed mountain in the World of Light but a treacherous place in the Region of Darkness. Thickets of thorns sheltered monsters; tiers of stone ridges harboured demons. No sound of fowl or beast came to one’s ears; only ghosts or griffins walked before one’s eyes. The howling cold wind; the endless black mist – the howling cold wind was the huffing of infernal hosts; the endless black mist was the puffing of demonic troops. There was no scenic splendour though one looked high and low; all was desolation when one started left and right. At that place there were mountains and peaks and summits, and caves and streams; only no grass grew on the mountains; no peaks punctured the sky; no travellers scaled the summits; no caves ever harboured the clouds; no water flowed in the streams. They were all spectres on the shores and bogies beneath the cliffs. The phantoms huddled in the caves and lost souls hid on stream-floors. All around the mountain, bull-heads and Horse-faces wildly clamoured; half hidden and half in sight, hungry ghosts and needy souls often wept. The judge in quest of souls in haste and fury delivered his summons; the guard who chased the spirits, snorted and shouted to present his papers. The Swift of Foot: a boiling cyclone! The Soul Snatcher: a spreading dark mist!* Had he not trusted in the judge’s protection, Taizong would have never made it across this Mountain of Perpetual Shade. As they proceeded, they came to a place where there were many halls and chambers; everywhere they turned, melancholy cries blasted their ears and grotesque sights struck terror in their hearts. “What is this place?” asked Taizong again.

“The Eighteen-fold Hell behind the Mountain of Perpetual Shade,” said the judge.

“What is that?” said Taizong.

The judge replied, “Listen to what I’ve to say: *the Hell of the Rack, Gloomy Guilt, and the Fiery Pit: all such sorrow, desolation are caused by a thousand sins committed in the life before; they all come to suffer after they die. The Hell of Hades, Tongue-Pulling, Skin-Shredding: all those weeping, wailing, pining, and mourning await the traitors, the rebels, and the Heaven baiters; he of God-mouth and serpent-heart will end up here. The Hell of Grinding, Pounding, Crushing: with frayed skin and torn flesh, gaping mouths and grinding teeth, these’re they who cheat, lie to work injustice, fawn, and flatter to deceive. The Hell of Ice, Mutilation, and Evisceration: with grimy face and matted hair, knitted brow and doleful look, these’re they who fleece the simple with weights unjust and so bring ruin upon themselves. The Hell of Boiling Oil, Grim Darkness, and the Sword Mountain: they shake, quake, sorrow, and pine: for oppressing the righteous by violence and fraud they now must cower in their lonely pain. The Hell of the Pool of Blood, Avici, \*Scales, and Weights: all the skins peeled and bones exposed, the limbs cut and the tendons severed are caused by murder stemming from greed, the taking of life of both humans and beasts. Their fall has no reversal in a millennium – eternal perdition without release. Each’s firmly bound and tightly tied, shackled by both ropes and cords. The slightest move brings on the Red-haired, the Black-face demons with long spears and sharp swords; the Bull-head, the Horse-face demons with iron spikes and bronze gavels, they strike till faces contort and blood flows down but cries to Earth and Heaven find no response. So it is that man ought not to betray his own conscience for gods have knowledge who could get away? Thus vice and virtue will at last be paid: it differs only in coming soon or late.*”

When Taizong heard these words, he was terror-stricken. They went on for a little while and came upon a group of demon soldiers, each holding banners and flags and kneeling beside the road. “The Guards of the Bridges have come to receive you,” they said.

The judge ordered them to make way and proceeded to lead Taizong across a golden bridge. Looking to one side, Taizong saw another silver bridge on which there were several travellers who seemed to be persons of principle and rectitude, justice and honesty. They too were led by banners and flags. On the other side was another bridge with icy wind churning around it and bloody waves seething below. The continuous sound of weeping and wailing could be heard. “What’s the name of that bridge?” asked Taizong.

“Your Majesty,” said the judge, “it’s the No-Option Bridge. When you reach the World of Light, you must’ve this recorded for posterity. For below the bridge there’s nothing but *a vast body of surging water; a strait and treacherous path; like bales of raw silk flowing down the Long River or the Pit of Fire floating up to Earth, this cold air, oppressive, this bone-piercing chill; foul stench both irksome and nauseous. The waves roll and swirl; no boat comes or goes to ferry men across; with naked feet and tangled hair those moving here and there are all damned spirits. The bridge’s a few miles long but only three spans wide. Its height measures a hundred feet; below, a thousand fathoms deep. On top are no railways for hands to hold; beneath you’ve man-seizing savage fiends who bound by cangues and locks, fight to flee No-Option’s parlous path. Look at those ferocious guardians beside the bridge and those damned souls in the river – how truly wretched! On branches and twigs clothes of green, red, yellow, and purple silk hang; below the precipice strumpets crouch for having abused their own in-laws. Iron dogs and brass serpents will strive to feed on them; their fall’s eternal – there’s no way out.*” The poem says:

*Ghosts are heard wailing; demons often cry as waves of blood rise 10000 feet high.*

*Horse-faces and Bull-heads by countless scores this No-Option Bridge grimly fortify.*

While Taizong and his guides were speaking, the several Guardians of the Bridge went back to their station. Terrified by his vision, Taizong could only nod his head in silent horror. He followed the judge and the grand marshal across the malicious water of the No-Option River and the bitter Realm of the Bloody Bowl. Soon they arrived at the City of the Dead where clamouring voices were heard proclaiming distinctly, “Li Shimin has come! Li Shimin has come!” When Taizong heard all this shouting, his heart shook and his gall quivered. Then he saw a throng of spirits, some with backs broken by the rack, some with severed limbs, and some headless who barred his way and shouted together, “Give us back our lives! Give us back our lives!”

In terror Taizong tried desperately to flee and hide at the same time crying, “Mr. Cui, save me! Mr. Cui, save me!”

“Your Majesty,” said the judge, “these’re the spirits of various princes, their underlings, brigands, and robbers from sundry places. Through works of injustice, both theirs and others’, they perished and are now cut off from salvation because there’s none to receive them or care for them. Since they’ve no money or belongings, they’re ghosts abandoned to hunger and cold. Only if Your Majesty can give them some money I’ll be able to offer you deliverance.”

“I came here,” said Taizong, “with empty hands. Where can I get money?”

“Your Majesty,” said the judge, “there’s in the World of the Living a man who’s deposited great sums of gold and silver in our Region of Darkness. You can use your name for a loan and lowly judge will serve as your voucher; we’ll borrow a roomful of money from him and distribute it among the hungry ghosts. You’ll then be able to get past them.”

“Who’s this man?” asked Taizong.

“He’s a man from the Kaifeng District in Henan Province,” said the judge. “His given name’s Liang and surname’s Xiang. He’s thirteen rooms of gold and silver down here. If Your Majesty borrows from him, you can repay him when you return to the World of Light.” Highly pleased and more than willing to use his name for the loan, Taizong at once signed a note for the judge. He borrowed a roomful of gold, silver, and the grand marshal was asked to distribute the money among the ghosts. The judge also instructed them, saying, “You may divide up these pieces of silver and gold among yourselves and use them accordingly. Let the Great Tang Dad pass for he’s still a long time to live. By the solemn word of the Ten Kings I’m accompanying him to return to life. When he reaches the world of the living, he’s been instructed to hold a Grand Mass of Land and Water for your salvation.”<sup>10</sup> So start no more trouble.”

When the ghosts heard these words and received the silver and gold, they obeyed and turned back. The judge ordered the grand marshal to wave the flag for guiding souls and led Taizong out of the City of the Dead. They set out again on a broad and level path, leaving quickly with light, airy steps. They travelled for a long time and arrived at the junction of the 6-fold Path of Transmigration. They saw some people who rode the clouds wearing embroidered capes and some with Daoist amulets of gold fish dangling from their waists; there were in fact monks, nuns, Daoists, secular persons, all varieties of beasts, fowls, ghosts, and spirits. In an unending stream they all ran beneath the Wheel of Transmigration to enter each into a predestined path. “What’s the meaning of this?” asked the Tang emperor.

“Your Majesty,” said the judge, “as your mind’s enlightened to perceive the pervasive immanence of a god-nature in all things, you must remember this and proclaim it in the World of the Living. This is called the 6-fold Path of Transmigration. Those who perform good works will ascend to the way of the mortals; those who remain patriotic to the end will advance to the way of nobility; those who practice filial piety will be born again into the way of blessing; those who’re just and honest will enter once more into the way of humans; those who cherish virtue will proceed to the way of riches; those who’re vicious and violent will fall back into the way of demons.”

*When the Tang emperor heard this, he nodded his head and sighed, saying, “Ah, how truly good’s goodness! To do good will never bring illness! In a good heart always abide. On a good way your door fling wide. Let no evil thoughts arise and all mischief you must despise. Don’t say there’s no retribution for gods have their disposition.”*

The judge accompanied the Tang emperor up to the very entrance to the way of nobility before he saluted himself and called out, “Your Majesty, this is where you must proceed and here your humble judge will take leave of you. I’m asking Grand Marshal Bullseye to accompany you a little further.”

The Tang emperor thanked him, saying, “I’m sorry, sir, that you’ve had to travel such great distance on my account.”

“When Your Majesty returns to the World of Light,” said the judge, “be very certain that you celebrate the Grand Mass of Land and Water so that those wretched, homeless souls may be delivered. Please don’t forget! Only if there’s no murmuring for vengeance in the Region of Darkness there’ll be the prosperity of peace in your World of Light. If there’re any wicked ways in your life, you must change them one by one, teach your subjects far, and wide to do well. You may be assured then that your empire will be firmly established and fame will go down to posterity.”

The Tang emperor said, “I promise to grant each one of your requests.”

Having parted from Judge Cui, he followed Grand Marshal Bullseye and entered the gate. The grand marshal saw inside a black-maned bay horse complete with rein and saddle. Lending the emperor assistance from left and right, he quickly helped him mount it. The horse shot forward like an arrow and soon they reached the bank of the Wei River where a pair of golden carps could be seen frolicking on top of the waves. Pleased by what he saw the Tang emperor reined in his horse and stopped to watch. “Your Majesty,” said the grand marshal, “let’s hurry and get you back into your city while there’s still time.” But the emperor persisted in his indulgence and refused to go forward. The grand marshal grabbed 1 of his legs and shouted, “You still won’t move? What’re you waiting for?”

With a loud splash, he was pushed off his horse into the Wei River, and thus he left the Region of Darkness and returned to the World of Light. We’ll now tell you about those who served before the Throne in the Tang dynasty. Xu Mougong, Qin Shubao, Hu Jingde, Duan Zhixian, Ma Sanbao, Cheng Yaojin, Gao Shilian, Li Shiji, Fang Xuanling, Du Ruhui, Xiao Yu, Fu Yi, Zhang Daoyuan, Zhang Shiheng, and Wang Guei constituted the 2 groups of civil and military officials. They gathered with the crown prince of the Eastern Palace, the queen, the ladies of the court, and the chief steward in the Hall of the White Tiger for the imperial mourning. At the same time, they discussed issuing the obituary proclamation for the whole empire and crowning the prince as emperor. From 1 side of the hall, Wei Zheng stepped forward and said, “All of you, please refrain from doing anything hasty. If you alarm the various districts and cities, you may bring about something undesirable and unexpected. Let’s wait here for another day for our lord will surely come back to life.”

“What nonsense you’re talking, Prime Minister Wei,” said Xu Jingzong, coming from below, “for the ancient proverb says: *just as spilled water can’t be retrieved, so a dead man can never return!* Why do you mouth such empty words to vex our minds? What reason do you’ve for this?”



“To tell you the truth, Mr. Xu,” said Wei Zheng, “I’ve been instructed since my youth in the arts of mortality. My calculations are most accurate and I promise you that His Majesty won’t die.” As they were talking, they suddenly heard a loud voice crying in the coffin, “You’ve drowned me! You’ve drowned me!” It so startled the civil and military officials and so terrified the queen and the ladies, that every one of them had *a face brown as autumnal mulberry leaves, a body limp as the willow of early spring. The legs of the crown prince buckled, he could not hold the mourning staff to finish his rites. The soul of the steward left him, he could not wear the mourning cap to show his grief the matrons collapsed; the ladies pitched sideways; the matrons collapsed like weak hibiscus blasted by savage wind. The ladies pitched sideways like lilies overwhelmed by sudden rain. The petrified lords – their bones and tendons feeble – trembled and shook, all dumb and awestruck. The whole White Tiger Hall was like a bridge with broken beams; the funeral stage resembled a temple wrecked.* Every person attending the court ran away, and no one dared approach the coffin. Only the upright Xu Mougong, the rational Prime Minister Wei, the courageous Qin Qiong, and the impulsive Jingde came forward and took hold of the coffin. “Your Majesty,” they cried, “if there’s something bothering you, tell us about it. Don’t play ghost and terrify your relatives!” Then however, Wei Zheng said, “He’s not playing ghost. His Majesty’s coming back to life! Get some tools, quick!” They opened the top of the coffin and saw indeed that Taizong was sitting up inside, still shouting, “You’ve drowned me! Who bailed me out?” Mougong and the rest of them went forward to lift him up, saying, “Don’t be afraid, Your Majesty and wake up. Your subjects are here to protect you.” Only then did the Tang emperor open his eyes and say, “How I suffered just now! I barely escaped attack by spiteful demons from the Region of Darkness only to encounter death by drowning!” “Have no fear, Your Majesty,” said the ministers. “What kind of calamity occurred in the water?” “I was riding a horse,” the Tang emperor said, “when we came near the Wei River where two fishes were playing. That deceitful Grand Marshal Bullseye pushed me off my horse into the river and I was almost drowned.” “His Majesty isn’t still entirely free from the influences of the dead,” said Wei Zheng. He quickly ordered from the imperial dispensary medicinal broth designed to calm his spirit and fortify his soul. They also prepared some rice gruel, and only after taking such nourishments once or twice did he become his old self again, fully regaining his living senses. A quick calculation revealed that the Tang emperor had been dead for three days and nights and then returned to life to rule again. Thus a testimonial poem says:

*From ancient times how oft the world has changed!  
History is full of kingdoms that rise and fall.  
Countless were the wonders of Zhou, Han, and Jin.  
Which could match King Tang’s from death to life recall?*

By then it was dusk; the various ministers withdrew after they had seen the emperor retire. The next day they took off their mourning garb and changed into their court attire: everyone had on his red robe and black cap, his purple sash and gold medal, waiting outside the gate to be summoned to court. We now tell you about Taizong who, having received the medicine prescribed for calming his spirit and fortifying his soul, and having taken the rice broth several times, was carried into his bedchamber by his attendants. He slept soundly that whole night, and when he arose at dawn, his spirit was fully revived. Look how he was attired: *donned a tall, royal cap; wore a dark ochre robe; put on a belt of green jade from Blue Mountain; trod a pair of empire-building carefree boots. His stunning looks surpassed anyone in court: with power to spare he resumed his reign. What a great Tang emperor of justice and truth, the Majestic Li who rose again from the dead!* The Tang emperor went up to the Treasure hall of the Golden Carriage and gathered together the 2 groups of civil and military officials who stood in attention according to rank and file after shouting 3 times “Long live the emperor.” Then they heard this loud announcement: “If there’s any business, come forth and make your memorial; if there’s no business, you’re dismissed from court.” From the east came the row of civil officials and from the west came the row of military officials; they all went forward and saluted themselves before the steps of white jade. “Your Majesty,” they said, “may we inquire how you awoke from your slumber that lasted so long?” “On that day, after we’d received the letter from Wei Zheng,” said Taizong, “we felt that our soul had departed from these halls, having been invited by the imperial guardsmen to join a hunting party. As we’re travelling, the men and horses both disappeared whereupon my dad, the former emperor, and deceased brothers came to hassle us. We’d have been unable to escape them hadn’t it been for the arrival of someone in black cap and robe; this man happened to be the judge Cui Jue who managed to send my deceased brothers away. We handed Wei Zheng’s letter over to him and as he’s reading it, some boys in blue came to lead us with flags and banners to the Hall of Darkness where we’re met by the Ten Kings of the Underworld. They told us of the Jing River Dragon who accused us of having him slain after promising to save him. We in turn explained to them what happened and they assured us that our case had been jointly reviewed by the Three Tribunes. Then they asked for the Chronicles of Life and Death to examine what’s to be our allotted age. Judge Cui presented his books and King Yama said after checking them that Heaven had assigned us a portion of thirty-three years. Since we’d ruled for only thirteen years, we’re entitled to twenty more years of living. So Grand Marshal Bullseye and Judge Cui were ordered to send us back here. We took leave of the Ten Kings and promised to thank them with gifts of melons and other fruits. After our departure from the Hall of Darkness, we encountered in the Underworld all those who’re treasonous to the state and disloyal to their parents, practiced neither virtue nor righteousness, squandered the five grains, cheated openly or in secret, indulged in unjust weights and measurements – in sum, the rapists, the thieves, the liars, the hypocrites, the wantons, the deviates, the connivers, and the lawbreakers. They’re all suffering from various tortures by grinding, burning, pounding, sawing, frying, boiling, hanging, and skinning. There’re tens of thousands of them and we’d not make an end of this ghastly sight. Thereafter we passed by the City of the Dead filled with the souls of brigands and bandits from all over the Earth who came to block our path. Fortunately Judge Cui was willing to vouch for us and we’d then borrow a roomful of gold and silver from Old Man Xiang of Henan to buy off the spirits before we’d proceed once more. We finally parted after Judge Cui’d repeatedly instructed us that when we returned to the World of Light we’re to celebrate a Grand Mass of Land and Water for the salvation of those orphaned spirits. After leaving the 6-fold Path of Transmigration, Grand Marshal Bullseye asked us to mount a horse so swift it seemed to be flying and brought me to the bank of the Wei River. As we’re enjoying the sight of two fishes playing in the water, he grabbed our legs and pushed us into the river. Only then we came back to life.” When the various ministers heard these words, they all praised and congratulated the emperor. A notice was also sent out to every town, district in the empire, and all the officials presented gratulatory memorials. Taizong proclaimed a general amnesty for the prisoners in the empire. Moreover, he asked for an inventory of those convicted of capital crimes and the judge from the Board of Justice submitted some 400 names of those awaiting death by beheading or hanging. Taizong granted them one year’s leave to return to their families so that they could settle their affairs and put their property in order before going to the marketplace to receive their just deserts. The prisoners all thanked him for such grace before departing. After issuing another edict for the care and welfare of orphans, Taizong also released some 3000 court maidens and concubines from the palace and married them off to worthy military officers. From that time on, his reign was truly a virtuous 1 to which a testimonial poem says:

*Great’s the virtue of the Great Tang Ruler!  
Surpassing Sage Kings, he makes his people prosper.  
500 convicts may now leave the prison; 3000 maidens find release from the palace.  
The empire’s officials all wish him long life.  
The ministers at court all give him high praise.  
Such good heart, once stirred, the Heavens should bless, and pass such weal to 17 generations.*

After releasing the court maidens and convicts, Taizong also issued another proclamation to be posted throughout the empire. The proclamation read: *The cosmos’s brightly surveyed by the sun and the moon though vast; the world though immense, approves not villains in Heaven or on Earth. If your intent’s trickery, even this life will bring retribution; if your giving exceeds receiving, there’s blessing not only in the life hereafter. 1000 clever designs aren’t as living according to one’s duties; 10000 men of violence can’t compare with 1 frugal and content. If you’re bent on good works and mercy, need you read the Threads with diligence? If you intend to harm others even the learning of God’s vain!* From that time on, there was not a single person in the empire who did not practice virtue. Meanwhile, another notice was posted asking for a volunteer to take the melons and other fruits to the Region of Darkness. At the same time, a roomful of gold and silver from the treasury was sent with the Imperial Duke of Khotan, Hu Jingde, to the Kaifeng District of Henan so that the debt to Xiang Liang could be repaid. After the notice had been posted for some days, a worthy came forth to volunteer his life for the mission. He was originally from Zunzhou; his surname was Liu and his given name Quan, and he belonged to a family of great wealth. The reason he came forward was that his wife, Li Cuilian, happened to have given a gold hairpin from her head, by way of alms, to a monk in front of their house. When Liu Quan chided her for her indiscretion in flaunting herself outside their home, Li became so upset that she promptly hanged herself, leaving behind her a pair of young children who wept piteously day and night. Liu Quan was so filled with remorse by the sight of them that he was willing to leave life and property to take the melons to hell. He therefore took down the royal notice and came to see the Tang emperor. The emperor ordered him to go to the Lodge of the Golden Pavilion where a pair of southern melons were put on his head, some money in his sleeve, and some medicine in his mouth. So Liu Quan died by taking poison. His soul, still bearing the fruits on his head, arrived at the Gate of Spirits. The demon guardian at the door shouted, “Who’re you that you dare to come here?” “By the imperial command of the Great Tang Emperor Taizong,” said Liu Quan, “I came here especially to present melons and other fruits for the enjoyment of the Ten Kings of the Underworld.” The demon guardian received him amiably and led him to the Treasure Hall of Darkness. When he saw King Yama, he presented the melons saying, “By order of the Tang emperor, I came from afar to present these melons as a token of thanks for the gracious hospitality of the Ten Kings.” Highly pleased, King Yama said, “That Emperor Taizong’s certainly a man of his word!” He accepted the melons and proceeded to ask the messenger about his name and his home. “Your humble servant,” said Liu Quan, “resided originally in Junzhou; my surname’s Liu and my given name’s Quan. Because my wife hanged herself, leaving no one to care for our children, I decided to leave home and children and sacrifice my life for the country by helping my emperor to take these melons here as a thank offering.” When the 10 Kings heard these words, they asked at once for Li, the wife of Liu Quan; she was brought in by the demon guardian. Wife and husband had a reunion before the Hall of Darkness. They conversed about what had happened and also thanked the 10 Kings for this meeting. King Yama moreover examined the Books of Life and Death and found that both husband and wife were supposed to live to a ripe old age. He quickly ordered the demon guardian to take them back to life but the guardian said, “Since Li Cuilian’s been back in the World of Darkness for many days, her body no longer exists. To whom should her soul attach herself?” “The emperor’s sister, Li Yuying’s,” said King Yama, “destined to die very soon. Borrow her body right away so that this woman can return to life.” The demon guardian obeyed the order and led Liu Quan and his wife out of the Region of Darkness to return to life.

**012**  
**The Tang emperor firmly sincere, convenes a Grand Mass; Guanyin converts Gold Cicada in epiphany**

The demon guardian who was leading Liu Quan and his wife out of the Region of Darkness. Accompanied by a swirling dark wind, they went directly back to Chang’an of the great nation. The demon pushed the soul of Liu Quan into the Golden Court Pavilion Lodge but the soul of Cuilian was brought into the inner court of the royal palace. Just then the Princess Yuying was walking beneath the shadows of flowers along a path covered with green moss. The demon guardian crashed right into her and pushed her to the ground; her living soul was snatched away and the soul of Cuilian was pushed into Yuying’s body instead. The demon guardian then returned to the Region of Darkness. The maidservants of the palace both young and old when they saw that Yuying had fallen and died, ran quickly to the Hall of the Golden Chimes and reported the incident to the queen saying, “The princess’s fallen and died!” Horrified, the queen reported it to Taizong. When Taizong heard the news, he nodded, sighing, and said, “So this has come to pass indeed! We did ask the King of Darkness whether the old and young of our family would be safe or not. He said, ‘They’ll all be safe but I fear that your royal sister won’t live long.’ Now his word’s fulfilled.” All the inhabitants of the palace came to mourn her but when they reached the spot where she had fallen, they saw that the princess was breathing. “Stop weeping! Stop weeping!” said the Tang emperor. “Don’t startle her!” he went forward and lifted her head with the royal hand crying out, “Wake up, royal sister!” Our princess suddenly turned over and cried, “Husband, walk slowly! Wait for me!” “Sister,” said Taizong, “we’re all here.” Lifting her head and opening her eyes to look around, the princess said, “Who’re you that you dare touch me?” “This is your royal brother,” said Taizong, “and your sister-in-law.” “Where do I’ve any royal brother and sister-in-law?” asked the princess. “My family’s Li and my maiden name’s Li Cuilian. My husband’s surname’s Liu. His given name’s Quan. Both of us are from Junzhou. Because I pulled a golden hairpin to give to a monk outside our home as alms three months ago, my husband rebuked me for walking indiscreetly out of our doors and thus violating the etiquette appropriate to a woman. He scolded me, and I became so enraged that I hanged myself with a white silk cord leaving behind a pair of children who wept night and day. Because of my husband who’s sent by the Tang emperor to the Region of Darkness to present melons, King Yama took pity on us and allowed us both to return to life. He’s walking ahead; I’d not keep up with him, tripped, and fell. How rude you’re all! Not knowing my name, how dare you touch me!”

When Taizong heard these words, he said to his attendants, “I suppose my sister’s knocked senseless by the fall. She’s babbling!” He ordered that Yuying be helped into the palace and medicine be brought in from the court dispensary.

As the Tang emperor went back to the court, one of his assistants came forward to report saying, “Your Majesty, the man, Liu Quan who went to present the melons has returned to life. He’s now outside the gate awaiting your order.”

Greatly startled, the Tang emperor at once gave the order for Liu Quan to be brought in who then saluted himself before the red-lacquered courtyard. Taizong asked him, “How did the presentation of melons come off?”

“Your subject,” said Liu Quan, “bore the melons on his head and went straight to the Gate of Spirits. I was led to the Hall of Darkness where I met the Ten Kings of the Underworld. I presented the melons and spoke at length about the sincere gratitude of my lord. King Yama’s most delighted and complimented Your Majesty profusely saying: *That Taizong emperor’s indeed a man of virtue and his word!*”

“What did you happen to see in the Region of Darkness?” asked the Tang emperor.

“Your subject didn’t travel far,” said Liu Quan, “and I didn’t see much. I only heard King Yama questioning me on my native village and my name. Your subject therefore gave him a full account of how I abandoned home and children because of my wife’s suicide and volunteered for the mission. He quickly sent for a demon guardian who brought in my wife and we’re reunited at the Hall of Darkness. Meanwhile they also examined the Books of Life and Death and told us that we’d both live to a ripe old age. The demon guardian’s dispatched to see us back to life. Your subject walked ahead but my wife fell behind. I’m grateful that I’m now returned to life but I don’t know where my wife’s gone.”

Alarmed, the Tang emperor asked, “Did King Yama say anything about your wife?”

“He didn’t say much,” said Liu Quan. “I only heard the demon guardian’s exclamation that Li Cuilian had been dead for so long that her body no longer existed. King Yama said, ‘The royal sister, Li Yuying should die shortly. Let Cuilian borrow the body of Yuying so that she may return to life.’ Your subject’s no knowledge of who that royal sister’s and where she resides, nor has made any attempt to locate her.”

When the Tang emperor heard this report, he was filled with delight and said to the many officials around him, “When we took leave of King Yama, we questioned him with regard to the inhabitants of the palace. He said that the old and the young would all be safe though he feared that our sister wouldn’t live long. Just now our sister Yuying fell dying beneath the flowers. When we went to her assistance, she regained her consciousness shortly, crying, ‘Husband, walk slowly! Wait for me!’ We thought that her fall had knocked her senseless as she’s babbling like that. But when we questioned her carefully, she said exactly what Liu Quan now tells us.”

“If Her Royal Highness passed away shortly only to say these things after she regained consciousness,” said Wei Zheng, “this means that there’s a real possibility that Liu Quan’s wife’s returned to life by borrowing another person’s body. Let’s invite the princess to come out and see what she’s to tell us.”

“We just asked the court dispensary to send in some medicine,” said the Tang emperor, “for we don’t know what’s happening.”

Some ladies of the court went to fetch the princess and they found her inside screaming, “Why do I need to take any medicine? How’d this be my house? Ours is a clean, cool house of tiles unlike this one, yellow as if it’d jaundice and with such gaudy appointments! Let me out! Let me out!”

She was still shouting when four or five ladies and two or three eunuchs took hold of her and led her outside to the court. The Tang emperor said, “Do you recognise your husband?”

“What’re you talking about?” said Yuying. “The two of us were pledged to each other since childhood as husband and wife. I bore him a boy and a girl. How’d I not recognise him?”

The Tang emperor asked 1 of the palatial officials, “Help her go down from the Treasure Hall.”

The princess went right before the steps of white jade and when she saw Liu Quan, she grabbed him saying, “Husband, where’ve you been? You didn’t even wait for me! I tripped, fell, and then was surrounded by all these crazy people talking nonsense! What do you’ve to say to this?”

Liu Quan heard that she was speaking like his wife but the person he saw certainly did not resemble her and dared not acknowledge her to be his own. The Tang emperor said, *“Indeed, men have seen mountains cracking, or the gaping of earth; but none has seen the living exchanged for the dead!” What a just and kindly ruler!* He took his sister’s toilet boxes, garments, jewellery, and bestowed them all on Liu Quan; it was as if the man was provided with a dowry. He was moreover exempted forever from having to engage in any compulsory service to the Crown and told to take the royal sister back to his home. So husband and wife together expressed their gratitude before the steps and returned happily to their village. A testimonial poem says:

*How long, how short – man’s his span of years; he lives and dies, each foreordained by fate.  
Liu Quan presented melons and returned to life; in someone’s body so did Li, his mate.*

The 2 of them took leave of the emperor, went directly back to Junzhou, and saw that both house and children were in good order. They never ceased thereafter to proclaim the rewards of virtue but we’ll speak of them no further. We now tell you about Yuchi Gong who took a huge load of gold and silver and went to see Xiang Liang at the Kaifeng District in Henan. It turned out that the man made his living by selling water while his wife whose surname was Zhang, sold pottery in front of their home. Whatever money they made, they kept only enough for their subsistence, giving all the rest either as alms to the monks or as gifts to the dead by purchasing paper money and burning it. They thus built up enormous merit; for though they were poor folks in the World of Light, they were in fact leading citizens for whom jade and gold were laid up in the other world. When Yuchi Gong came to their door with the gold and silver, Papa Xiang and Mama Xiang were terror-stricken. And when they also saw the district officials with their horses and carriages assembling outside their thatched hut, the aged couple were dumbfounded. They knelt on the floor and respected without ceasing. “Old folks, please arise,” said Yuchi Gong. “Though I’m an imperial official, I came here with this gold and silver to repay you by order of my king.”

Shaking and quaking, the man said, “Your lowly servant’s never lent money to others. How dare we accept such inexplicable wealth?”

“I’ve found out,” said Yuchi Gong, “that you’re indeed a poor fellow. But you’ve also given alms to feed the monks. Whatever exceeds your necessities you’ve used to purchase paper money that you burned in dedication to the Region of Darkness. You’ve thus accumulated a vast fortune down below. Our emperor, Taizong returned to life after being dead for three days; he borrowed a roomful of gold and silver from you while he’s in the Region of Darkness and we’re returning the exact sum to you. Please count your money accordingly so that we may make our report back to the emperor.”

Xiang Liang and his wife however, remained adamant. They raised their hands to Heaven and cried, “If your lowly servants accepted this gold and silver, we’d die quickly. We might’ve been given credit for burning paper cash but this is a secret unknown to us. Moreover, what evidence do we’ve that our dad, His Majesty borrowed our money in some other world? We simply daren’t accept this.”

“His Majesty told us,” said Yuchi Gong, “that he received the loan from you because Judge Cui vouched for him and he’d bear testimony. So please accept this.”

“Even if I were to die,” said Xiang Liang, “I’d not accept the gift.”

Seeing that they persisted in their refusal, Yuchi Gong had no alternative but to send someone back to report to the Throne. When Taizong saw the report and learned that Xiang Liang had refused to accept the gold and silver, he said, “They’re truly virtuous elders!” He issued a decree at once that Hu Jingde should use the money to erect a temple, build a shrine, and support the religious services that would be performed in them. The old couple, in other words, would be repaid in this manner. The decree went out to Jingde who having expressed his gratitude, facing the capital, proclaimed its content for all to know. He used the money to purchase a lot of about fifty acres not needed either by the military authorities or the people. A temple was erected on this piece of land and named the Royal Xiangguo Temple.<sup>1</sup> To the left of it there was also a shrine dedicated to Papa and Mama Xiang with a stone inscription stating that the buildings were erected under the supervision of Yuchi Gong. This is the Great Xiangguo Temple still standing today. The work was finished and reported; Taizong was exceedingly pleased. He then gathered many officials together in order that a public notice be issued to invite monks for the celebration of the Grand Mass of Land and Water, so that those orphaned souls in the Region of Darkness might find salvation. The notice went throughout the empire, and officials of all regions were asked to recommend monks illustrious for their holiness to go to Chang’an for the Mass. In less than a month’s time, various monks from the empire had arrived. The Tang emperor ordered the court historian, Fu Yi, to select an illustrious priest to take charge of the ceremonies. When Fu Yi received the order however, he presented a memorial to the Throne that attempted to dispute the worth of God.<sup>2</sup> The memorial said:

*The teachings of the Western Territory deny the relations of ruler and subject, of dad and son. With the doctrines of the 3 Ways<sup>3</sup> and the 6-fold Path, ‘they beguile and seduce the foolish and the simpleminded. They emphasise the sins of the past in order to ensure the felicities of the future. By reciting in Sanskrit, they seek a way of escape. We submit however, that birth, death, and the length of one’s life are ordered by nature; but the conditions of public disgrace or honour are determined by human volition. These phenomena aren’t ordained by God as some philistines would now maintain. The teachings of God didn’t exist in the time of the 5 Thearchs, the 3 Kings, and yet those rulers were wise, their subjects loyal, and reigns long-lasting. It’s not until the period of Emperor Ming in the Han dynasty that the worship of foreign gods was established<sup>5</sup> but this meant only that priests of the Western Territory were permitted to propagate their faith. The event in fact represented a foreign intrusion in China and the teachings are hardly worthy to be believed.*

When Taizong saw the memorial, he had it distributed among the various officials for discussion. At that time the Prime Minister Xiao Yu came forward and saluted himself to address the throne saying, “The teachings of God that’ve flourished in several previous dynasties seek to exalt the good and to restrain what’s evil. In this way they’re covertly an aid to the nation and there’s no reason why they’d be rejected. For God’s after all also a sage and he who spurns a sage’s himself lawless. I urge that the dissenter be severely punished.”

Taking up the debate with Xiao Yu, Fu Yi contended that propriety had its foundation in service to one’s parents and ruler. Yet God forsook his parents and left his family; indeed, he defied the Son of Heaven all by himself, just as he used an inherited body to rebel against his parents. Xiao Yu, Fu Yi went on to say, was not born in the wilds but by his adherence to this doctrine of parental denial, he confirmed the saying that an un-filial son had in fact no parents. Xiao Yu however, folded his hands in front of him and declared, “Hell’s established precisely for people of this kind.”

Taizong thereupon called on the Lord High Chamberlain, Zhang Daoyuan, the President of the Grand Secretariat, Zhang Shiheng, and asked how efficacious the Religious exercises were in the procure-ment of blessings. The 2 officials replied, “The emphasis of God’s on purity, benevolence, compassion, the proper fruits, and the unreality of things. It’s Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou dynasty who set the Three Religions in order.<sup>6</sup> The Chan Master, Da Hui also had extolled those concepts of the dark and the distant. Generations of people revered such saints as the Fifth Patriarch who became man<sup>7</sup> or the Awakening religion who appeared in his sacred form; none of them proved to be inconspicuous in grace and power. Moreover, it’s been held since antiquity that the Three Religions are most honourable, not to be destroyed or abolished. Therefore, we beseech Your Majesty to exercise your clear and sagacious judgement.”

Highly pleased, Taizong said, “The words of our worthy subjects are reasonable. Anyone who disputes them further will be punished.”

He thereupon ordered Wei Zheng, Xiao Yu, and Zhang Daoyuan to invite the various Religious priests to prepare the site for the Grand Mass and to select from among them someone of great merit and virtue to serve as the altar master. All the officials then saluted their heads to the ground to thank the emperor before withdrawing. From that time also came the law that any person who denounces a monk or Religion will have his arms broken. The next day the 3 court officials began the process of selection at the Mountain-River Altar and from among the priests gathered there they chose an illustrious monk of great merit. *Gold Cicada was his former divine name. As heedless he was of a god’s talk, he had to suffer in this world of dust to fall in the net by being born a man. He met misfortune as he came to Earth and evildoers even before his birth. His dad: Chen, a Zhuangyuan from Haizhou. His mum’s sire: chief of this dynasty’s court. Fated by his natal star to fall in the stream, he followed tide and current, chased by mighty waves. At Gold Mountain, the island, he had great luck for the abbot, Qian’an<sup>8</sup> raised him up. He met his true mum at age 18 and called on her dad at the capital. A great army was sent by Chief Kaishan to stamp out at Hongzhou the vicious crew. The Zhuangyuan Guangrui escaped his doom: Son rejoined sire – how worthy of praise! They saw the emperor to receive his grace; their names resounded in Lingyan Tower.<sup>9</sup>Declining office, he chose a monk’s life at Hongfu Temple to seek the true Way, this old God-child nicknamed River Float with a religious name of Chen Xuanzang.* So that very day the multitude selected the priest Xuanzang, a man who had been a monk since childhood who maintained a vegetarian diet and received the commandments the moment he left his mum’s womb. His maternal grandpa was Yin Kaishan, 1 of the chief army commanders of the present dynasty. His dad, Chen Guangrui had taken the prize of Zhuangyuan and was appointed Grand Secretary of the Wenyuan Chamber. Xuanzang however, had no love for glory or wealth, being dedicated wholly to the pursuit of Extinguishment. Their investigations revealed that he had an excellent family background and the highest moral character. Not one of the thousands of classics and *Threads* had he failed to master; none of the Religious recites and hymns was unknown to him. The three officials led Xuanzang before the throne. After going through elaborate court ritual, they saluted to report, “Your subjects have selected an illustrious monk by the name of Chen Xuanzang in obedience to your holy decree.”

Hearing the name, Taizong thought silently for a long time and said, “Can Xuanzang be the son of Grand Secretary Chen Guangrui?”

Child River Float respected and replied, “That’s indeed your subject.”

“This is a most appropriate choice,” said Taizong, delighted. “You’re truly a monk of great virtue and possessing the mind of Chan. We therefore appoint you the Grand Expositor of the Faith, Supreme Vicar of Priests.”

Xuanzang touched his forehead for God to express his gratitude and receive his appointment. He was given furthermore, a cassock of knitted gold and 5 colours, a Vairocana hat, <sup>10</sup>and the instruction diligently to seek out all worthy monks and to rank all these teachers<sup>11</sup> in order. They were to follow the imperial decree and proceed to the Temple of Transformation<sup>12</sup> where they would begin the ritual after selecting a propitious day and hour. Xuanzang saluted again to receive the decree and left. He went to the Temple of Transformation and gathered many monks together; they made ready the beds, built the platforms, and rehearsed the poems. A total of 1200 worthy monks, young and old were chosen who were then further separated into three divisions occupying the rear, middle, and front portions of the hall. All the preparations were completed and everything was put in order before the gods. The 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of that same year was selected as the lucky day, when a Grand

Mass of Land and Water lasting 7 weeks (in accordance with the number 7 times 7) would begin. A memorial was presented to Taizong who went with all his relatives and officials, both civil and military, to the Mass on that day to burn incense and listen to the lecture. A poem as testimony says:

*When the year-star of Zhenguan reached 13, the king called his people to hear the Sacred Books.  
The boundless Law's performed at a plot of truth; cloud, fog, and light filled the Great Promise Hall.  
By grace the king decreed this grand temple's rite; shell-shed Gold Cicada sought wealth of the West.  
He spread wide the good works to save the damned and held his faith to preach the 3 Modes of Life.*<sup>13</sup>

In the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the Zhenguan period when the year stood at *jisi* and the ninth month at *jiaxu*, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day and at the auspicious hour of *gueimao*, Chen Xuanzang, the Great Expositor-Priest, gathered together 1200 illustrious monks. They met at the Temple of Transformation in the city of Chang'an to expound the various holy *Threads*. After holding court early that morning, the emperor led many officials both military and civil and left the Treasure Hall of Golden Chimes by phoenix carriages and dragon chariots. They came to the temple to listen to the lectures and raise incense. How does the imperial cortege appear? Truly it comes with a *sky full of blessed air, countless shafts of hallowed light. The favourable wind blows gently; the omniscient sun shines brightly. 1000 lords with girdle-jade walk in front and rear. The many flags of guardsmen stand both left and right. Those holding gilt bludgeons, halberds, and axes march in pairs; the red silk lanterns, the royal incense urn, move in solemnity. The dragons fly and the phoenixes exercise; the falcons soar and the eagles take wing. This Son of Heaven's an upright sage; the righteous ministers are good. They increase our bliss by a millennium, surpassing Yu and Shun; secure peace of 10000 ages, rivalling Yao and Tang. We also see the curve-handled umbrella and robes with rolling dragons – their glare lighting up each other; the jade joined-rings, the phoenix fans waving through holy mist. Those caps of pearls and belts of jade; the purple sashes and medals of gold. 1000 rows of soldiers protect the Throne; 2 lines of marshals uphold the carriage. This emperor cleansed and sincere, salutes a god, Glad to raise incense and seek virtue's fruit.* The grand cortege of the Tang emperor soon arrived in front of the temple. The emperor ordered a halt to the poems, left the carriages, and led many officials in the worship of God by taking up burning incense sticks in their hands. After saluting 3 times holding the incense, they raised their heads and looked around them. This was indeed a splendid religious hall. *See dancing flags and banners; bright, gleaming sunshades. Dancing flags and banners fill the air with strands of flashing coloured mists. Bright, gleaming sunshades glow in the sun as fiery bolts. Imposing, the gold image of Lokāyestha; <sup>14</sup>most awesome, the jade features of the Arhats. Divine flowers fill the vases. Sandalwood incense burn in the urns. The divine flowers filling the vases adorn the temple with a brilliant forest of brocade. The sandalwood incense burning in the urns covers the clear sky with waves of fragrant clouds. Piled high on red trays are fruits in season. On coloured counters, mounds of cakes and sweets rest. Rows of noble priests recite the holy Threads to save from their travails those orphaned souls.* Taizong and his officials each lifted the incense; they also worshipped the golden body of a god and paid homage to the *Arhats*. Thereafter, the Master of the Law, Chen Xuanzang, the Grand Expositor of the Faith, led the various monks to greet the Tang emperor. After the ceremony, they went back to their seats according to their rank and station. The priest then presented Taizong with the proclamation for the deliverance of the orphaned souls. It read:

*The supreme virtue's vast and endless for Religion is founded upon Extinguishment; the spirit of the pure and the clean circulates freely and flows everywhere in the 3 Regions. There're 1000 changes and 10000 transformations, all regulated by the forces of yin and yang. Boundless and vast indeed are the substance, the function, the true nature, and the permanence of such phenomena. But look at those orphaned souls, how worthy they're of our pity and commiseration! Now by the holy command of Taizong, we've selected and assembled various priests who'll engage in meditation and the proclamation of the Law. Flinging wide the gates of salvation and setting in motion many vessels of mercy, we'd deliver you, the multitudes from the Sea of Woe and save you from perdition and the 6-fold Path. You'll be led to return to the way of truth and to enjoy the bliss of Heaven. Whether it be by motion, rest, or non-activity, you'll be united with and become pure essences. Therefore make use of this noble occasion for you're invited to the pleasures of the celestial city. Take advantage of our Grand Mass so that you may find release from Hell's confinement, ascend quickly, freely to ultimate bliss, and travel without restraint in the Region of the West.*<sup>15</sup>

The poem says:

*An urn of mortal incense. Some scrolls of salvific power.  
As we proclaim this boundless Law, receive now Heaven's endless grace.  
All your guilt and crime abolished, you lost souls may leave your prison.  
May our nation be firmly blessed with peace long and all-embracing.*

Highly pleased by what he read, Taizong said to the monks, "Be firm, all of you in your devotion and don't slack in your service to God. After the achievement of merit and after each's received his blessing, we'll reward you handsomely. Be assured that you'll not have laboured in vain." The 1200 monks all touched their foreheads to express their gratitude. After the 3 vegetarian meals of the day, the Tang emperor returned to the palace to wait for the formal celebration of the mass a week hence when he would again be invited to raise incense. As dusk was about to fall, the various officials all retired. Look at the *long stretch of clear sky as twilight dims as specks of jackdaw drop to their perch late. People grow quiet, the city full of lights: now is the time for Chan monks to meditate.* The next morning the Master of the Law again ascended his seat and gathered the monks to recite their *Threads*. The Nun Guanyin of the Potalaka Mountain in the South Sea since receiving the command of Siddhartha was searching in the city of Chang'an for a worthy person to be the seeker of scriptures. For a long time however, she encountered no one truly virtuous. Then she learned that Taizong was extolling merit and virtue and selecting illustrious monks to hold the Grand Mass. When she discovered moreover that the chief priest and celebrant was the monk Child River Float who was a worshipper of God born from paradise and happened also to be the very elder whom she had sent to this disciple, the Nun was exceedingly pleased. She immediately took the treasures bestowed by God and carried them out with Liberation to sell them on the main streets of the city. These treasures were the embroidered cassock with rare jewels and the 9-ring priestly staff. But she kept hidden the Golden, the Constrictive, and the Prohibitive Fillets for use in a later time putting up for sale only the cassock and the priestly staff. Now in the city of Chang'an there was one of those foolish monks who had not been selected to participate in the Grand Mass but who happened to possess a few strands of pelf. Seeing the Nun who had changed herself into a monk covered with scabs and sores, barefooted and bareheaded, dressed in rags, and holding up for sale the glowing cassock, he approached and asked, "You filthy monk, how much do you want for your cassock?"

"The price of the cassock's," said the Nun, "five thousand taels of silver; two thousand for the staff."

The foolish monk laughed and said, "This filthy monk's mad! A lunatic! You want seven thousand taels of silver for two such common articles? They aren't worth that much even if wearing them would make you mortal or turn you into a god. Take them away! You'll never be able to sell them!"

The Nun did not bother to argue with him; she walked away and proceeded on her journey with Liberation. After a long while, they came to the Eastern Flower Gate and ran right into the chief minister Xiao Yu who was just returning from court. His outriders were shouting to clear the streets but the Nun boldly refused to step aside. She stood on the street holding the cassock and met the chief minister head on. The chief minister pulled in his reins to look at this bright, luminous cassock, and asked his subordinates to inquire about the price of the garment. "I want five thousand taels for the cassock," said the Nun, "and two thousand for the staff."

"What's so good about them," asked Xiao Yu, "that they'd be so expensive?"

"This cassock's," said the Nun, "something good about it and something bad, too. For some people it may be very expensive but for others it may cost nothing at all."

"What's good about it," asked Xiao Yu, "and what's bad about it?"

"He who wears my cassock," replied the Nun, "won't fall into perdition, suffer in Hell, encounter violence, or meet tigers, and wolves. That's how good it's! But if the person happens to be a foolish monk who relishes pleasures and rejoices in iniquities, or a priest who obeys neither the dietary laws nor the commandments, or a worldly fellow who attacks the *Threads* and slanders a god, he'll never even get to see my cassock. That's what's bad about it!"

The chief minister asked again, "What do you mean, it'll be expensive for some and cheap for others?"

"He who doesn't follow the Law of God," said the Nun, "or revere the Three Jewels will be required to pay seven thousand taels if he insists on buying my cassock and staff. That's how expensive it'll be! But if he honours the Three Jewels, rejoices in doing good deeds, and obeys our God, he's a person worthy of these things. I'll willingly give him the cassock and the staff to establish an affinity of goodness with him. That's what I meant when I said that for some it would cost nothing."

When Xiao Yu heard these words, his face could not hide his pleasure, for he knew that this was a good person. He dismounted at once and greeted the Nun ceremoniously saying, "Your Holy Eminence, please pardon whatever offence Xiao Yu might have caused. Our Great Tang Emperor's a most religious person and all the officials of his court are like-minded. In fact, we've just begun a Grand Mass of Land and Water and this cassock will be most appropriate for the use of Chen Xuanzang, the Grand Expositor of the Faith. Let me go with you to have an audience with the Throne."

The Nun was happy to comply with the suggestion. They moved around and went into the Eastern Flower Gate. The Custodian of the Yellow Door went inside to make the report, and they were summoned to the Treasure Hall where Xiao Yu and the 2 monks covered with scabs and sores stood below the steps. "What does Xiao Yu want to report to us?" asked the Tang emperor.

Saluting himself before the steps, Xiao Yu said, "Your subject going out of the Eastern Flower Gate met by chance these two monks selling a cassock and a priestly staff. I thought of the priest, Xuanzang who might wear this garment. For this reason, we asked to have an audience with Your Majesty."

Highly pleased, Taizong asked for the price of the cassock. The Nun and Liberation stood at the foot of the steps but did not salute at all. When asked the price of the cassock, the Nun replied, "Five thousand taels for the cassock and two thousand for the priestly staff."

"What's so good about the cassock," said Taizong, "that it'd cost so much?"

The Nun said, *"Of this cassock, a dragon that wears but one shred will miss the woe of being devoured by the great roc; or a crane on which one thread's hung will transcend this world and reach the place of the gods. Sit in it: ten thousand gods will salute you! Move with it: seven Gods will follow you!"*<sup>16</sup> *This cassock's made of silk drawn from ice silkworm<sup>17</sup> and threads spun by skilled craftsmen. Mortal girls did the weaving; divine maidens helped at the loom. Bit by bit, the parts were sewn and embroidered. Stitch by stitch, it arose – a brocade from the heddle, its pellucid weave finer than ornate blooms. Its colours, brilliant, emit precious light. Wear it, and crimson mist will surround your frame. Doff it and see the coloured clouds take flight. Outside the Three Heavens' door its primal light's seen; before the Five Mountains its magic aura grew. Inlaid are layers of lotus from the West, hanging pearls shine like planets, and stars. On four corners are pearls that glow at night; on top stays fastened an emerald. Though lacking the all-seeing primal form, it's held by Eight Treasures all aglow. This cassock you keep folded at leisure; you wear it to meet sages. When it's kept folded at leisure, its rainbow-like hues cut through a thousand wrappings. When you wear it to meet sages, all Heaven takes fright – both demons and gods! On top are the riddhi pearl, the māni pearl, the dust-clearing pearl, the wind-stopping pearl. There're also the red cornelian, the purple coral, the luminescent pearl,*<sup>18</sup> *the Son of Sari. They rob the moon of its whiteness; they match the sun in its redness. In waves its divine aura imbues the sky; in flashes its brightness lifts up its perfection. In waves its divine aura imbues the sky, flooding the Gate of Heaven. In flashes its brightness lifts up its perfection, lighting up the whole world. Shining upon the mountains and the streams, it wakens tigers and leopards; lighting up the isles and the seas, moves dragons and fishes. Along its edges hang two chains of melted gold and joins the collars a ring of snow-white jade.* The poem says:

*The august 3 Jewels' most noble truths judge all 4 Creatures on the 6-fold Path.  
The mind brightened feeds on God's Law and humans'; the nature perceived transmits the wisdom lamp.  
Solemn Lightningdhātu<sup>19</sup> guards one's body when a mind's pure like ice in flasks of jade.  
Since God caused this cassock to be made that 10000 kalpas could harm a monk?"*

When the Tang emperor who was up in the Treasure Hall, heard these words, he was highly pleased. "Tell me, priest," he asked again, "What's so good about the nine-ring priestly staff?"

"My staff's," said the Nun, "on it *nine joined-rings made of iron and set in bronze and nine joints of vine mortal ever young. When held, it scorns the sight of aging bones; it leaves the mount to return with fleecy clouds. It roamed through Heaven with the Fifth Patriarch; it broke Hell's gate where Luo Bo sought his Mom.*<sup>20</sup>*Not soiled by the filth of this red-dust world, it gladly trails a god-monk up Mount Jade.*"<sup>21</sup>

When the Tang emperor heard these words, he gave the order to have the cassock spread open so that he might examine it carefully from top to bottom. *It's indeed a marvellous thing!* "Venerable Elder of the Great Law," he said, "we'll not deceive you. At this very moment we've exalted the Religion of Mercy and planted abundantly in the fields of blessing. You may see many priests assembled in the Temple of Transformation to perform the Law and the *Threads*. In their midst is a man of great merit and virtue whose religious name's Xuanzang. We wish therefore to purchase these two treasure objects from you to give them to him. How much do you really want for these things?"

Hearing these words, the Nun and Liberation folded their hands and gave praise to a god. "If he's a man of virtue and merit," she said to the throne saluting, "this humble cleric's willing to give them to him. I'll accept no money."

She finished speaking and turned at once to leave. The Tang emperor quickly asked Xiao Yu to hold her back. Standing up in the Hall, he saluted low before saying, "Previously you claimed that the cassock's worth five thousand taels of silver and the staff two thousand. Now that you see we want to buy them, you refuse to accept payment. You're implying that we'd bank on our position and take your possession by force? That's absurd! We'll pay you according to the original sum you asked for; please don't refuse it."



Raising her hands for a salutation, the Nun said, “This humble cleric made a vow before stating that anyone who reveres the Three Treasures, rejoices in virtue, and submits to our God will be given these treasures free. Since it is clear that Your Majesty’s eager to magnify virtue, rest in excellence, and honour our Religious faith by having an illustrious monk proclaim the Great Law, it’s my duty to present these gifts to you. I’ll take no money for them. They’ll be left here and this humble cleric will take leave of you.”

When the Tang emperor saw that she was so insistent, he was very pleased. He ordered the Court of Banquets to prepare a huge vegetarian feast to thank the Nun who firmly declined that also. She left amiably and went back to her hiding place at the Temple of the Local Spirit that we’ll mention no further. Taizong held a noon court and asked Wei Zheng to summon Xuanzang to an audience. That Master of the Law was just leading the monks in reciting *Threads* and reciting *geyas*.<sup>22</sup> When he heard the emperor’s decree, he left the platform immediately and followed Wei Zheng to come before the Throne. “We’ve greatly troubled our Master,” said Taizong, “to render exemplary good works for which we’ve hardly anything to offer you in thanks. This morning Xiao Yu came upon two monks who’re willing to present us with a brocaded cassock with rare treasures and a nine-ring priestly staff. We therefore call specially for you so that you may receive them for your enjoyment and use.” Xuanzang respected to express his thanks. “If our Master of the Law’s willing,” said Taizong, “please put the garment on for us to have a look.”

The priest accordingly shook open the cassock and draped it on his body, holding the staff in his hands. As he stood before the steps, ruler and subjects were all delighted. *Here’s a true child of the Siddhartha! Look at him: his looks imposing, how elegant and fine! This robe of God fits him like a glove!* Its most lustrous splendour spills over the world; bright colours imbue the universe. Up and down are set rows of shining pearls; back and front thread layers of golden cords. Brocade gilds the robe’s edges all around with patterns embroidered most varied and rare. Shaped like 8 Treasures are the thread-made frogs. A gold ring joins the collars with velvet loops. It shows on top and bottom Heaven’s ranks, stars, great, small are placed left, and right. Great is the fortune of Xuanzang, the priest now most deserving of this precious thing. He seems a living Arhat from the West or even better than its true elite. He holds his staff and all its nine rings clang, benefice in his Vairocana hat. *A true God-child, it’s no idle tale, he matches the Complete Liberation and that’s no lie!*

The various officials both civil and military stood before the steps and shouted, “Bravo!” Taizong could not have been more pleased, and he told the Master of the Law to keep his cassock on and the staff in his hands. 2 regiments of honour guards were ordered to accompany him along with many other officials. They left the gate of the court, proceeded on the main streets toward the temple, and the whole entourage gave the impression that a Zhuangyuan was making a tour of the city. *The procession’s a stirring sight indeed!*

The merchants and tradesmen in the city of Chang’an, the princes and noblemen, the men of ink and letters, the grown men and the little girls – they all vied to get a good view. Everyone exclaimed, “What a priest! He’s truly a living Arhat descended to Earth, a live Nun coming to the world!” Xuanzang went right to the temple where he was met by all the monks leaving their seats. The moment they saw him wearing that cassock and holding the staff, they all said that King Kṣitigarbha<sup>23</sup> had arrived! Everyone saluted to him and waited on him left and right. Going up to the main hall, Xuanzang lighted incense to honour a god, after which he spoke of the emperor’s favour to the multitude. Thereafter, each went back to his assigned seat, and soon the fiery orb sank westward. So it was *sun-set: mist hid trees and grasses; the capital’s first chimes rang out. Zheng-Zheng they struck thrice, and human traffic ceased; streets back and front soon grew quiet. Though lights burned bright at 1<sup>st</sup> Temple, the lone village was hush and mute. The monk focused to tend the Threads still – time to smelt demons, to nurse his spirit.*<sup>24</sup>Time went by like the snapping of fingers, and the formal celebration of the Grand Mass on the seventh day was to take place. Xuanzang presented the Tang emperor with a memorial, inviting him to raise the incense. News of these good works was circulating throughout the empire. Upon receiving the notice, Taizong sent for his carriage and led many of his officials, both civil and military, as well as his relatives and the ladies of the court, to the temple. All the people of the city – young and old, nobles and commoners – went along also to hear the preaching. At the same time, the Nun said to Liberation, “Today’s the formal celebration of the Grand Mass, the first seventh of seven such occasions. It’s about time for you and me to join the crowd. First, we want to see how the mass is going; second, we want to find out whether Gold Cicada’s worthy of my treasures; and third, we can discover what division of Religion he’s preaching about.” The 2 of them thereupon went to the temple; and so it is that *affinity will help old comrades meet as perfection returns to this holy seat.* As they walked inside the temple to look around, they discovered that such a place in the capital of a great nation indeed surpassed the Ṣaḍ-varṣa<sup>25</sup> or even the Jetavana Garden of the Śrāvastī. It was truly a lofty temple of Caturdīshgah, resounding with divine poems and Religious recites. The nun went directly to the side of the platform of many treasures and beheld a form truly resembling the enlightened Gold Cicada. The poem says:

*All things were pure with not a spot of dust. Xuanzang of the Great Law sat high onstage.  
Lost souls, redeemed, approached the place unseen; the city’s highborn came to hear the Law.  
You give when time’s ripe: this intent’s far-reaching. You die as you please, the Canon door’s open.  
As they heard him rehearse the Boundless Law, young and old were glad and comforted.*

Another poem says:

*Since she made a tour of this holy site, she met a friend unlike all other men.  
They spoke of the present and countless things –merit and trial in this world of dust.  
The cloud of Law extends to shroud the hills; the net of Truth spread wide to fill all space.  
Asses your lives and return to good thoughts for Heaven’s grace’s rife as falling blooms.*

On the platform, that Master of the Law recited for a while the *Thread of Life and Deliverance for the Dead*; he then lectured for a while on the *Heavenly Treasure Chronicle for Peace in the Nation*, after which he preached for a while on the *Scroll on Merit and Self-Cultivation*.<sup>28</sup>The Nun drew near and thumped her hands on the platform, calling out in a loud voice, “Hey, monk! You only know how to talk about the teachings of the Little Vehicle. Do you know nothing about the Great Vehicle?”

When Xuanzang heard this question, he was filled with delight. He turned and leaped down from the platform, raised his hands and saluted the Nun saying, “Venerable Teacher, please pardon your pupil for much disrespect. I only know that the priests who came before me all talk about the teachings of the Little Vehicle. I’ve no idea what the Great Vehicle teaches.”

“The doctrines of your Little Vehicle,” said the Nun, “can’t save the damned by leading them up to Heaven; they can only mislead and confuse mortals. I’ve in my possession Tripitaka, three collections of the Great Vehicle Laws of God that’re able to send the lost to Heaven, deliver the afflicted from their sufferings, fashion ageless bodies, break the cycles of coming, and going.”

As they were speaking, the officer in charge of incense and the inspection of halls reported to the emperor, “The Master’s just in the process of lecturing on the wondrous Law when he’s pulled down by two scabby mendicants, babbling some kind of nonsense.”

The king ordered them to be arrested and the 2 monks were taken by many people and pushed into the hall in the rear. When the nun saw Taizong, she neither raised her hands nor made a salute; instead she lifted her face and said, “What do you want of me, Your Majesty?”

Recognising her, the Tang emperor said, “Aren’t you the monk who brought us the cassock the other day?”

“I’m,” said the Nun.

“If you’ve come to listen to the lecture,” said Taizong, “you may as well take some vegetarian food. Why indulge in this wanton discussion with our Master and disturb the lecture hall, delaying our religious service?”

“What that Master of yours was lecturing on,” said the Nun, “happens to be the teachings of the Little Vehicle that can’t lead the lost up to Heaven. In my possession is the Tripitaka, the Great Vehicle Law of God that’s able to save the damned, deliver the afflicted and fashion the indestructible body.”

Delighted, Taizong asked eagerly, “Where’s your Great Vehicle Law of God?”

“At the place of our lord, Siddhartha,” said the Nun, “in the Great Temple of Thunderclap located in India of the Great Western Heaven. It can untie the knot of a hundred enmities and dispel unexpected misfortunes.”

“Can you remember any of it?” said Taizong.

“Certainly,” said the Nun.

Taizong was overjoyed and said, “Let the Master lead this monk to the platform to begin a lecture at once.”

The Nun led Liberation and flew up onto the high platform. She then trod on the hallowed clouds to rise up into the air and revealed her true salvific form, holding the pure vase with the willow branch. At her left stood the virile figure of Liberation carrying the rod. The Tang emperor was so overcome that he saluted to the sky and worshipped, as civil and military officials all knelt on the ground and burned incense. Throughout the temple, there was not one of the monks, nuns, Daoists, secular persons, scholars, craftsmen, and merchants who did not salute and exclaim, “Dear Nun! Dear Nun!” A poem as a testimony says:

*They saw only auspicious mist in diffusion and religious-body veiled by holy light.  
In the bright air of 9-fold Heaven a lady mortal appeared.*

*That Nun wore on her head a cap fastened by leaves of gold and set with flowers of jade with tassels of dangling pearls, all aglow with golden light.*

*On her body she’d a robe of fine blue silk, lightly coloured and simply fretted by circling dragons and soaring phoenixes.*

*Down in front’s hung a pair of fragrant girdle-jade that glowed with the moon and exercised with the wind, overlaid with precious pearls and with imperial jade.*

*Around her waist was tied an embroidered velvet skirt of ice worm silk and piped in gold in which she topped the coloured clouds and crossed the jasper sea.*

*Before her she led a cockatoo with red beak and yellow plumes that had roamed the Eastern Ocean and throughout the world to foster deeds of mercy and filial piety.*

*She held in her hands a grace-dispensing, world-sustaining precious vase in which was planted a twig of pliant willow that’d moisten the blue sky, sweep aside all evil – all clinging fog, and smoke.*

*Her jade rings joined embroidered loops; gold lotus grew beneath her feet.*

*For three days oft she came and went: this very Guanshiyin<sup>30</sup> who saves from pain and woe.*

So pleased by the vision was Tang Taizong that he forgot about his empire; so enthralled were the civil and military officials that they completely ignored court etiquette. Everyone was reciting, “I obey the Nun Guanshiyin!”

Taizong at once gave the order for a skilled painter to sketch the true form of the Nun. No sooner had he spoken than a certain Wu Daozi was selected who could portray gods, sages, and a master of the noble perspective and lofty vision. (This man in fact was the one who would later paint the portraits of meritorious officials in the Lingyan Tower.) Immediately he opened up his magnificent brush to record the true form. The hallowed clouds of the Nun gradually drifted away and in a little while the golden light disappeared. From mid-air came floating down a slip of paper on which were plainly written several lines in the style of the verse:

*We greet the great Ruler of Tang with scripts most sublime of the West.  
The way: 108000 miles. This Great Vehicle seek earnestly.  
These books when they reach your fair state can redeem damned spirits from Hell.  
If someone’s willing to go, he’ll become a god of gold.*

When Taizong saw the verse, he said to the various monks: “Let’s stop the Mass. Wait until I’ve sent someone to bring back the scriptures of the Great Vehicle. We’ll then renew our sincere effort to cultivate the fruits of virtue.”

Not one of the officials disagreed with the emperor who then asked in the temple, “Who’s willing to accept our commission to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven?”

Hardly had he finished speaking when the Master of the Law stepped from the side and saluted him saying, “Though your poor monk’s no talents, he’s ready to perform the service of a dog and horse. I’ll seek these true scriptures on behalf of Your Majesty, that the empire of our king may be firm and everlasting.”

Highly pleased, the Tang emperor went forward to raise up the monk with his royal hands saying, “If the Master’s willing to express his loyalty this way, undaunted by the great distance or the journey over mountains and streams, we’re willing to become bond brothers with you.” Xuanzang touched his forehead to express his gratitude. Being indeed a righteous man, the Tang emperor went at once before God in the temple and respected Xuanzang 4 times addressing him as “our brother and holy monk.”

Deeply moved, Xuanzang said, “Your Majesty, what ability and virtue does your poor monk possess that he’d merit such affection from your Heavenly Grace? I’ll not spare myself in this journey but proceed with all diligence until I reach the Western Heaven. If I don’t attain my goal or the true scriptures, I’ll not return to our land even if I’ve to die. I’d rather fall into eternal perdition in Hell.”

He thereupon lifted the incense before God and made that his vow. Highly pleased, the Tang emperor ordered his carriage back to the palace to wait for the auspicious day and hour, when official documents could be issued for the journey to begin. And so the Throne withdrew as everyone dispersed. Xuanzang also went back to the Temple of Great Blessing. The many monks of that temple and his several disciples who had heard about the quest for the scriptures, all came to see him. They asked, “Is it true that you’ve vowed to go to the Western Heaven?”

“It’s,” said Xuanzang.

“O Master.” 1 of his disciples said, “I’ve heard people say that the way to the Western Heaven’s long, filled with tigers, leopards, and all kinds of monsters. I fear that there’ll be departure but no return for you as it’ll be difficult to safeguard your life.”

"I've already made a great vow and a profound promise," said Xuanzang, "that if I don't acquire the true scriptures, I'll fall into eternal perdition in Hell. Since I've received such grace and favour from the king, I've no alternative but to serve my country to the utmost of my loyalty. It's true of course that I've no knowledge of how I'll fare on this journey or whether good or evil awaits me." He said to them again, "My disciples, after I leave, wait for two or three or six or seven years. If you see the branches of the pine trees within our gate pointing eastward, you'll know that I'm about to return. If not, I'll not be coming back."

The disciples all committed his words firmly to memory. The next morning Taizong held court and gathered all the officials together. They wrote up the formal rescript stating the intent to acquire scriptures and stamped it with the seal of free passage. The President of the Imperial Board of Astronomy then came with the report, "Today the positions of the planets are especially favourable for men to make a journey of great length."

The Tang emperor was most delighted. Thereafter the Custodian of the Yellow Gate also made a report saying, "The Master of the Law awaits your pleasure outside the court."

The emperor summoned him up to the treasure hall and said, "Royal Brother, today's an auspicious day for the journey and your rescript for free passage's ready. We also present you with a bowl made of purple gold for you to collect alms on your way. Two attendants have been selected to accompany you and a horse will be your means of travel. You may begin your journey at once."

Highly pleased, Xuanzang expressed his gratitude and received his gifts, not displaying the least desire to linger. The Tang emperor called for his carriage and led many officials outside the city gate to see him off. The monks in the Temple of Great Blessing and the disciples were already waiting there with Xuanzang's winter and summer clothing. When the emperor saw them, he ordered the bags to be packed on the horses first, and then asked an officer to bring a pitcher of juice. Taizong lifted his cup to toast the pilgrim saying, "What's the byname of our Royal Brother?"

"Your poor monk's," said Xuanzang, "a person who's left the family. He dares not assume a byname."

"The Nun said earlier," said Taizong, "that there're three collections of scriptures in the Western Heaven. Our Brother can take that as a byname and call himself Tripitaka. How about it?"

Thanking him, Xuanzang accepted the juice and said, "Your Majesty, juice's the first prohibition of priesthood. Your poor monk's practiced abstinence since birth."

"Today's journey's," said Taizong, "to be compared with no ordinary event. Please drink one cup of this dietary juice and accept our good wishes that go along with the toast." Xuanzang dared not refuse; he took the juice and was about to drink when he saw Taizong stoop down to scoop up a handful of dirt with his fingers and sprinkle it in the juice. Tripitaka had no idea what this gesture meant.

"Dear Brother," said Taizong, laughing, "how long it'll take you to come back from this trip to the Western Heaven?"

"Probably in three years' time," said Tripitaka, "I'll be returning to our noble nation."

"The years are long and the journey's great," said Taizong. "Drink this, Royal Brother, and remember: *treasure a handful of dirt from your home but love not ten thousand taels of foreign gold.*" Then Tripitaka understood the meaning of the handful of dirt sprinkled in his cup; he thanked the emperor once more and drained the cup. He went out of the gate and left as the Tang emperor returned in his carriage.

PART IV

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

013

In the den of tigers, the Gold Star brings deliverance; at Double-Fork Ridge, Boqin detains the monk

The rich Tang ruler issued a decree, deputing Xuanzang to seek the source of Chan.

He bent his mind to find the Dragon Den with firm resolve to climb the Spirit Vulture Mountain Peak.

Through how many states did he roam beyond his own? Through clouds and hills he passed 10000 times.

He now leaves the throne to go to the West; he'll keep law and faith to reach the Great Void.

Tripitaka on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 9<sup>th</sup> month in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the period Zhenguan was sent off by the Tang emperor and many officials from outside the gate of Chang'an. For a couple of days his horse trotted without ceasing and soon they reached the Temple of the Law Gate. The abbot of that temple led some 500 monks on both sides to receive him and took him inside. As they met, tea was served after which a vegetarian meal was presented. Soon after the meal, dusk fell, and thus *shadows moved to the Star River's nearing pulse; the moon was bright without a speck of dust. The wild geese called from the distant sky and washing flails beat from nearby homes. As birds returned to perch on withered trees, the Chan monks conversed in their Sanskrit tones. On rush mats placed upon a single bunk, they sat until halfway through the night.* Beneath the lamps the various monks discussed Religious doctrines and the purpose of seeking scriptures in the Western Heaven. Some pointed out that the waters were wide and the mountains very high; others mentioned that the roads were crowded with tigers and leopards; still others maintained that the precipitous peaks were difficult to scale; and another group insisted that the vicious monsters were hard to subdue. Tripitaka however, kept his mouth shut tightly but he pointed with his finger to his own heart and nodded his head several times. Not perceiving what he meant, the various monks folded their hands and asked, "Why did the Master of the Law point to his heart and nod his head?"

"When the mind's active," Tripitaka replied, "all kinds of *Killing* come into existence; when the mind's extinguished, all kinds of *Killing* will be extinguished. This disciple's already made an important vow before God in the Temple of Transformation and no alternative but to fulfil it with his whole heart. If I go, I'll not turn aside until I've reached the Western Heaven, seen God, and acquired the scriptures so that the Wheel of the Law will be turned to us and the kingdom of our lord will be secured forever."

When the various monks heard this statement, everyone congratulated and commended him saying, "A loyal and valiant master!" they praised him unceasingly as they escorted him to bed. Soon *the bamboos struck down the setting moon and the cocks crowed to gather the clouds of dawn.*

The various monks arose and prepared some tea and the morning meal. Xuanzang put on his cassock and went to worship God in the main hall. "Your disciple, Chen Xuanzang's," he said, "on his way to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. But my fleshly eyes are dim and unperceptive and don't recognise the true form of the living God. Now I wish to make a vow: that throughout this journey I'll burn incense whenever I come upon a temple, worship God whenever I meet a god, and sweep a pagoda whenever I reach a pagoda. May our God be merciful and soon reveal to me his Diamond Body sixteen feet tall. May he grant me the true scriptures so that they may be preserved in the Land of the East."

He finished his prayer and went back to the hall for the vegetarian meal after which his 2 attendants made ready the saddle and urged him to begin his journey. Going out of the temple's gate, Tripitaka took leave of the monks who grieved to see him go. They accompanied him for 10 miles before turning back, tears in their eyes as Tripitaka proceeded directly toward the West. It was the time of late autumn. See the Celestial Mortal: *trees growing bare in hamlets as rush petals break; from every maple column the red leaves fall. Trekkers through paths of mist and rain are few. The fair chrysanthemums, the sharp mountain rocks, cold streams and cracked lilies all make one sad. Snow falls from a frosty sky on rushes and reeds. One duck at dusk descends in the distant void. Clouds over the wilds move through the gathering gloom. The swallows depart; the wild geese appear – their cries though loud, are halting and forlorn.* After travelling for several days, master and disciples arrived at the city of Guangzhou. They were met at once by the various municipal officials of that city where they spent the night. The next morning they set off again, taking food and drink along the way, resting by night and journeying by day. In two or three days, they arrived at the District of Hezhou that formed the border of the Great Tang Empire. When the garrison commander of the border as well as the local monks and priests heard that the Master of the Law, a bond brother of the emperor, was on his way to the Western Heaven to see God by royal commission, they received the travellers with due reverence. Some chief priests then invited them to spend the night at Fu-Yuan Temple where every resident cleric came to pay respect to the pilgrims. Dinner was served, after which the two attendants were told to feed the horses well, for the Master wanted to leave before dawn. At the first crowing of the cock, he called for his attendants and aroused the monks of that temple.

They hastened to prepare tea and breakfast, after which the pilgrims departed from the border. Because he was somewhat impatient to get going, the Master arose a trifle too early. The fact is that this was late autumn, when cocks crow rather early – at about the time of the fourth watch. Facing the clear frost and the bright moon, the three of them (the horse made up the fourth member of the team) journeyed for some twenty or thirty miles, when they came upon a mountain range. It soon became exceedingly difficult for them to find their way. As they had to poke around in the grass to look for a path, they began to worry that they might be heading in the wrong direction. In that very anxious moment, they suddenly tripped; all three of them as well as the horse tumbled into a deep pit. Tripitaka was terrified; his companions all shook with fear. They were still trembling when they heard voices shouting, "Seize them! Seize them!"

A violent wind swept by, and a mob of fifty or sixty ogres appeared who seized Tripitaka with his companions and hauled them out of the pit. Quivering and shivering, the Master of the Law stole a glance around and saw a ferocious Monster King seated up on high. Truly he had *a figure most awesomely bold, a face most distinctly fierce. Light flashed from his lightning-like eyes; all quaked at his thunderous voice. His saw-like teeth jutted outward, like fangs they emerged from his jaws. Brocade wrapped his body around and coiling stripes covered his spine. They saw flesh through sparse, steely whiskers. Keen-edged were his claws like sharp swords. Even Huang Gong of East Sea would fear this white-browed King of Mount South.* Tripitaka was so frightened that his spirit left him while the bones of his followers grew weak and their tendons turned numb. The Monster King shouted for them to be bound, and the various ogres tied up all three of them with ropes. They were being prepared to be eaten when a clamour was heard outside the camp. Someone came in to report: "The Bear Mountain Lord and the Steer Hermit have arrived." Hearing this, Tripitaka looked up. The 1<sup>st</sup> 1 to come in was a swarthy fellow. *He seemed valiant and courageous with body both tough and brawny. His great strength could ford the waters. He prowled the woods, flaunting his power. Ever a good omen in dreams (the birth of a male baby), he showed now his forceful features. He could break or climb the green trees and predicted when winter was near. Truly he was most clever. Hence Mountain Lord was his name.* Following behind him was another husky fellow. *A cap of twin horns rugged and a humpback most majestic. His green robe showed his calm nature, he walked with a slumberous gait. He came from a dad named Bull; his mum's proper name was Cow. A great boon to people who ploughed, he was thus called the Steer Hermit.* The 2 of them swaggered in and the Monster King hurried out to receive them. The Bear Mountain Lord said, "You're in top form, General Yin. Congratulations! Congratulations!"

"General Yin looks better than ever," said the Steer Hermit. "It's marvellous! It's marvellous!"

"And you two gentlemen, how've you been these days?" asked the Monster King.

"Just maintaining my idleness," said the Mountain Lord.

"Just keeping up with the times," said the Hermit.

They sat down to chat some more after these exchanges. Meanwhile, 1 of Tripitaka's attendants was bound so tightly that he began to moan pitifully. "How did these three get here?" asked the swarthy fellow.

"They practically presented themselves at the door!" said the Monster King.

"Can they be used for the guests' dinner?" asked the Hermit, laughing.

"By all means!" said the Monster King.

"Let's not finish them all up," said the Mountain Lord. "We'll dine on two of them and leave one over."

The Monster King agreed. He called his subordinates at once to have the attendants eviscerated and their carcasses carved up; heads, hearts, and livers were to be presented to the guests, the limbs to the host, the remaining portions of flesh, and bones to the rest of the ogres.

The moment the order was given, the ogres pounced on the attendants like tigers preying on sheep: munching and crunching, they devoured them in no time at all. The priest nearly died of fear for this was his first bitter ordeal since his departure from Chang'an. As he was nursing his horror, light began to grow in the east. The 2 monsters did not retire until dawn. Saying, "We're beholden to your generous hospitality today. Permit us to repay in kind in another time."

They left together. Soon the sun rose high in the sky but Tripitaka was still in a stupor, unable to discern which way was north, south, east, or west. In that half-dead condition, he suddenly saw an old man approaching, holding a staff in his hands. Walking up to Tripitaka, the man waved his hands and all the ropes snapped. He then blew on Tripitaka and the monk began to revive. Falling on the ground, he said, "I thank the aged dad for saving the life of this poor monk!"

"Get up," the old man said, returning his salute, "you've lost anything?"

"The followers of your poor monk," said Tripitaka, "have been eaten by the monsters. I've no idea where my horse is or my luggage."

"Isn't that your horse over there with the two bundles?" asked the old man, pointing with his staff.

Tripitaka turned around and discovered that his belongings had indeed remained untouched. Somewhat relieved, he asked the old man, "Aged dad, what's this place? How do you happen to be here?"

"It's called the Double-Fork Ridge, a place infested with tigers and wolves. How did you manage to get here?"

"At the first crow of the cock," said Tripitaka, "your poor monk left the District of Hezhou. Little did I realise that we'd risen too early, lost our way tramping through fog, and dew. We came upon this Monster King so exceedingly ferocious that he captured me and my two followers. There's also a swarthy fellow called the Bear Mountain Lord and a husky fellow called the Steer Hermit. They arrived and addressed the Monster King as General Yin. All three of them devoured my two followers and retired only at dawn. I've no idea where I accrued the fortune and merit that caused the aged dad to rescue me here."

"That Steer Hermit's," said the old man, "a wild bull spirit; the Mountain Lord, a bear spirit; and General Yin, a tiger spirit. The various ogres are all demons of mountains and trees, spirits of strange beasts and wolves. Because of the primal purity of your nature, they can't devour you. Follow me now and I'll lead you on your way." Tripitaka could not be more thankful. Fastening the bundles on the

saddle and leading his horse, he followed the old man out of the pit and walked toward the main road. He tied the horse to the bushes beside the path and turned to thank the aged dad. At that moment a gentle breeze swept by, and the old man rose into the air and left, riding on a white crane with a crimson head. As the wind subsided, a slip of paper fluttered down with 2 lines of verse written on it:

*I'm the Planet Venus from the West who came to save you by special request, some pupils divine will come to your aid.*

*Blame not the scriptures for hardships ahead.*

When Tripitaka read this, he saluted toward the sky saying, "I thank the Gold Star for seeing me through this ordeal."

After that, he led his horse off again on his lonely and melancholy journey. On this ridge truly you've *cold and sougning, the wind of the rainforest; purling and gurgling, the water of the brooklets; fragrant and musky, wildflowers in bloom; in clutters and clumps, rough rocks piled high; chattering and clattering, the apes and the deer; in rank and file, the musk and the fallow deer. Chirping and cooing, birds frequently call. Silent and still, not one man is in sight. That master shivers and quivers to his anxious mind. This dear horse, scared and nervous, can barely raise his legs.* Ready to abandon his body and sacrifice his life, Tripitaka started up that rugged mountain. He journeyed for half a day but not a single human being or dwelling was in sight. He was gnawed by hunger and disheartened by the rough road. In that desperate moment, he saw two fierce tigers growling in front of him and several huge snakes circling behind him; vicious creatures appeared on his left and strange beasts on his right. As he was all by himself, Tripitaka had little alternative but to submit himself to the will of Heaven. As if to complete his helplessness, his horse's back was sagging and its legs were buckling; it went to its knees and soon lay salute on the ground. He could budge it neither by beating nor by tugging. With hardly an inch of space to stand on, our Master of the Law was in the depths of despair, thinking that certain death would be his fate. We can tell you however, that though he was in danger, help was on its way. For just as he thought he was about to expire, the vicious creatures began to scatter and the monstrous beasts fled; the fierce tigers vanished and the huge snakes disappeared. When Tripitaka looked further ahead, he saw a man coming over the mountain slope with a steel trident in his hands and bow and arrows at his waist. *He's indeed a valiant figure!* Look at him: *he had on his head a cap of leopard skin, spotted and Artemisia white; wore on his body a robe of lamb's wool with dark silk brocade. Around his waist was tied a lion-king belt and on his feet he wore tall boots of suede. His eyes would bulge like those of someone hung. His beard curled wildly like a fierce god's!* A bow and poisoned arrows hung on him. He held a huge trident of finest steel. His voice like thunder appalled mountain cats and wild pheasants quaked at his truculence. When Tripitaka saw him draw near, he knelt at the side of the path and called out, his hands clasped in front of him, "Great king, save me! Great king, save me!"

The fellow came up to Tripitaka and put down his trident. Raising up the monk with his hands, he said, "Don't be afraid, Elder, for I'm not a wicked man. I'm a hunter living in this mountain; my surname's Liu and my given name's Boqin. I also go by the nickname of Senior Guardian of the Mountain. I came here to find some animals to eat, not expecting to run into you. I hope I didn't scare you."

"Your poor monk's," said Tripitaka, "a cleric who's been sent by his Majesty, the Tang emperor to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven. When I arrived here a few moments ago, I was surrounded by tigers, wolves, and snakes so that I'd not proceed. But when the creatures saw you coming they all scattered and you've thus saved my life. Many thanks! Many thanks!"

"Since I live here and my livelihood depends on killing a few tigers and wolves," said Boqin, "or catching a few snakes and reptiles, I usually frighten the wild beasts away. If you've come from the Tang Empire, you're actually a native here for this is still Tang territory and I'm a Tang subject. You and I both live off the land belonging to the emperor so that we're in truth citizens of the same nation. Don't be afraid. Follow me. You may rest your horse at my place and I'll see you off in the morning." Tripitaka was filled with delight when he heard these words and he led his horse to follow the hunter. They passed the slope and again heard the howling of the wind. "Sit here, Elder," said Boqin, "and don't move. The sound of that wind tells me that a mountain cat's approaching. I'll take him home so that I can make a meal of him for you."

When Tripitaka heard this, his heart hammered and his gall quivered and he became rooted to the ground. Grasping his trident, that Guardian strode forward and came face to face with a great striped tiger. Seeing Boqin he turned and fled. The Guardian bellowed like a crack of thunder, "Cursed beast! Where'll you flee?" When the tiger saw him pressing near, he turned with flailing claws to spring at him only to be met by the Guardian with uplifted trident. Tripitaka was so terrified that he lay paralysed on the grass. Since leaving his mum's belly, when had he ever witnessed such violent and dangerous goings-on? The Guardian went after that tiger to the foot of the slope, and it was a magnificent battle between man and beast. See *raging resentment and churning whirlwind. In raging resentment the potent Guardian's hair pushed up his cap; like churning whirlwind the striped prince belched dust, displaying his might. This one bared its teeth and wielded its paws; that 1 stepped sideways yet turning to fight. The trident reached skyward, reflecting the sun. The striped tail stirred up both fog and cloud. This one stabbed madly at the breast of his foe; that one facing him would swallow him whole. Stay away and you may live out your years. Join the fray and you'll meet Yama, the king!* You hear the roar of the striped prince and the harsh cries of the Guardian. The roar of the striped prince shook mountains and streams to frighten birds and beasts; the harsh cries of the Guardian unlocked the Heavens to make the stars appear. The gold eyeballs of this one protruded and wrath burst from the bold heart of that 1. Lovable was Liu the Mountain Guardian; praiseworthy was this king of the wild beasts. So tiger and man fought, each craving life – a little slower, and one forfeits his soul! The 2 of them fought for about an hour and as the paws of the tiger began to slow and his torso to slacken, he was downed by the Guardian's trident stabbing him through the chest. A pitiful sight it's! The points of the trident pierced the heart, and at once the ground was covered with blood. The Guardian then dragged the beast by the ear up the road. What a man! He hardly panted, nor did his face change colour. He said to Tripitaka, "We're lucky! We're lucky! This mountain cat should be sufficient for a day's food for the elder."

Applauding him unceasingly, Tripitaka said, "The Guardian's truly a mountain god!"

"What ability do I've," said Boqin, "that I merit such acclaim? This is really the good fortune of the dad. Let's go. I'd like to skin him quickly so that I can cook some of his meat to entertain you." He held the trident in 1 hand and dragged the tiger with the other leading the way while Tripitaka followed him with his horse. They walked together past the slope and all at once came upon a mountain village, in front of which old trees were *soaring skyward, roads filled with wild creepers. In countless canyons the wind was cool; on many ridges came strange sounds and sights. 1 path's wild blooms, their scent clung to one's body; a few poles of bamboo, what enduring green! The portal of grass, the wattle-fenced yard – a picture to paint or sketch. The stone-slab bridge, the white-earth walls – how charming indeed and rare! Now in the wistful face of autumn, the air was cool and brisk, by the wayside yellow leaves fell; over the peaks the white clouds drifted. In thinly-grown woods the wild fowls twittered and young dogs yelped outside the village gate.* When Boqin reached the door of his house, he threw down the dead tiger and called, "Little ones, where're you?" Out came 3 or 4 houseboys, all looking rather unattractive and mean who hauled the tiger inside. Boqin told them to skin it quickly and prepare it for the guest. He then turned around to welcome Tripitaka into his dwelling and as they greeted each other, Tripitaka thanked him again for the great favour of saving his life. "We're fellow countrymen," said Boqin, "and there's little need for you to thank me." After they had sat down and drunk tea, an old woman with someone who appeared to be her daughter-in-law came out to greet Tripitaka. "These're my mum and wife," said Boqin.

"Pray ask your parent to take the honoured seat," said Tripitaka, "and let your poor monk pay his respects."

"Dad's a guest coming from great distance," said the old woman. "Please relax and don't stand on ceremony."

"Mum," said Boqin, "he's been sent by the Tang emperor to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven. He met your son just now at the ridge. Since we're fellow countrymen, I invited him to the house to rest his horse. Tomorrow I'll see him on his way."

When she heard these words, the old woman was very pleased. "Good! Good! Good!" she said. "The timing couldn't be better even if we'd planned to invite him. For tomorrow happens to be the anniversary of your late dad's death. Let's invite the elder to perform some good deeds and recite an appropriate passage of scripture. We'll see him off day after tomorrow."

Although he was a tiger slayer, a so-called *Guardian of the Mountain*, our Liu Boqin had a good deal of filial feeling for his mum. When he heard what she said, he immediately wanted to prepare the incense and the paper money so that Tripitaka might be asked to stay. As they talked, the sky began to darken. The servants brought chairs and a table and set out several dishes of well-cooked tiger meat, steaming hot. Boqin invited Tripitaka to begin, telling him that rice would follow. "O dear!" said Tripitaka, his hands folded. "To tell you the truth, I've been a monk since leaving my mum's womb and never eaten any meat."

Hearing this, Boqin reflected a while. He then said, "Elder, for generations this humble family's never kept a vegetarian diet. I suppose we'd find some bamboo shoots, wood ears, and prepare some dried vegetables and bean cakes but they'd all be cooked with the fat of deer or tigers. Even our pots and pans are grease-soaked! What I'm to do? I must ask the elder's pardon."

"Don't fret," said Tripitaka. "Enjoy the food yourself. Even if I weren't to eat for three or four days, I'd bear the hunger. But I daren't break the dietary commandment."

"Suppose you starve to death," said Boqin, "what then?"

"I'm indebted to the Heavenly kindness of the Guardian," said Tripitaka, "for saving me from the packs of tigers and wolves. Starving to death's better than being food for a tiger."

When Boqin's mum heard this, she cried, "Son, stop such idle talk with the elder. Let me prepare a vegetarian dish to serve him."

"Where'd you get such a dish?" said Boqin.

"Never mind. I'll fix it," said his mum. She asked her daughter-in-law to take down a small cooking pan and heat it until much of the grease had burned off. They washed and scrubbed the pan repeatedly and then put it back on the stove and boiled some water in it. Taking some elm leaves from the mountain, they made soup with it after which they cooked some rice with yellow millet mixed with Indian corn. They also prepared two bowls of dried vegetables and brought it all out to the table. "Elder," the aged mum said to Tripitaka, "please have some. This is the cleanest and purest food that my daughter-in-law and I've ever prepared."

Tripitaka left his seat to thank her before sitting down again. Boqin removed himself to another place; dishes and bowls full of un-sauced and unsalted tiger meat, musk deer meat, serpent meat, fox flesh, rabbit, and strips of cured venison were set before him. To keep Tripitaka company, he sat down and was about to pick up his chopsticks when he saw Tripitaka fold his hands and begin to recite something. Startled, Boqin dared not touch his chopsticks; he jumped up instead and stood to 1 side. Having uttered no more than a few phrases, Tripitaka said to him, "Please eat."

"You're a priest who likes to recite short scriptures," said Boqin.

"That's not scripture," said Tripitaka, "only a prayer to be said before meals."

"You people who leave your families," said Boqin, "are particular about everything! Even for a meal you've to mumble something!"

They ate their dinner and the dishes and bowls were taken away. Evening was setting in when Boqin led Tripitaka out of the main hall to go for a walk at the back of the dwelling. They passed through a corridor and arrived at a straw shed. Pushing open the door, they walked inside where they found several heavy bows and some quivers of arrows hanging on the walls. 2 pieces of tiger skin stinking and bloodstained, were draped over the cross beams, a number of spears, knives, tridents, and rods were stuck into the ground at 1 corner. There were 2 seats in the middle of the shed. Boqin invited Tripitaka to sit for a moment. Seeing that the place was so gruesome and putrid, Tripitaka dared not linger. They soon left the shed and walked further back to a huge garden where there seemed to be no end of thick clumps of chrysanthemum piling their gold and stands of maple hoisting their crimson. With a loud rustle, more than a dozen fat deer and a large herd of musk deer jumped out. Calm and mild-mannered, they were not at all frightened at the sight of human beings. Tripitaka said, "You must've tamed these animals."

"Like the people in your city of Chang'an," said Boqin, "where the affluent store up wealth and treasures and the landlords gather rice and grain, so we hunters must keep some of these wild beasts to prepare against dark days. That's all!"

As they walked, conversed, it grew dark, and they returned to the house to rest. As soon as the members of the family, young and old arose next morning, they went to prepare vegetarian food to serve to the priest who was then asked to begin his recitations. Having 1<sup>st</sup> washed his hands, the priest went to the ancestral hall with the Guardian to burn incense. Only after he had saluted to the house shrine did Tripitaka beat on his wooden fish and recite first the true sentences for the purification of the mouth, and then the divine formula for the purification of mind and body. He went on to the *Thread for the Salvation of the Dead* after which Boqin requested him to compose in writing a specific prayer for the deliverance of the deceased. He then took up the *Diamond Thread* and the *Guanyin Thread*, each of which was given a loud and clear recitation. After lunch, he recited several sections from the *Lotus Thread* and the *Amitāyus Thread* before finishing with the *Peacock Thread* and a brief recounting of the story of God healing a beggar. *Biche Purged from Evil Karma* where Buddha's encountered an ascetic practicing austerities northeast of a heap in the Jetavana Garden. When asked why he looked so sad by the patriarch, the man replied that he was ill and had no one to care for him. Whereupon Buddha stretched out his hand and touched the man who was healed at once. Taking him out of his hut, Buddha bathed and clothed him before urging him to be even more diligent in his religious devotion. Soon it was evening again. All kinds of incense were burned together with the various paper horses, images of the deities, and the prayer for the deliverance of the deceased. The Religious service was thus completed, and each person retired. The soul of Boqin's dad verily a ghost redeemed from perdition came to his own house and appeared to all the members of his family in a dream. "It's difficult," he said, "For me to escape my bitter ordeals in the Region of Darkness and for a long time I'd not attain salvation. Fortunately the holy monk's recitations have now expiated my sins. King Yama's ordered someone to send me to the rich land of China where I may assume my next disciple in a noble family. All of you therefore must take care to thank the elder and see that you're negligent in no way. Now I leave you."

So it is that *there is, in all things, a solemn purpose: to save the dead from perdition and pain.* When the whole family awoke from the dream, the sun was already rising in the east. The wife of Boqin said, "Guardian, I dreamed last night that dad came to the house. He said that it's difficult for him to escape his bitter ordeals in the Region of Darkness and for a long time he'd not attain salvation. Fortunately the holy monk's recitations have now expiated his sins and King Yama's ordered someone to send him to the rich land of China where he may assume his next disciple in a noble family.

He told us to take care to thank the elder and be negligent in no way. After he'd finished speaking, he drifted away despite my plea for him to stay. I woke up and it's all a dream!"

"I'd a dream also," said Boqin, "one exactly like yours! Let's get up and talk to mum about this."

The 2 of them were about to do so when they heard the old mum calling, "Boqin, come here. I want to talk to you." They went in and found the mum sitting up in bed. "Son," she said, "I'd a happy dream last night. I dreamed that your dad came to the house saying that, thanks to the redemptive work of the elder, his sins had been expiated. He's on his way to the rich land of China where he'll assume his next disciple in a noble family."

Husband and wife laughed uproariously. Boqin said, “Your daughter-in-law and I’d both this dream and we’re just coming to tell you. Little did we expect that mum’s call also had to do with this dream.” They therefore called on every member of the family to express their gratitude and prepare the monk’s horse for travel. They came saluting before the priest and said, “We thank the elder for providing life and deliverance for our deceased dad for which we can never repay you sufficiently.”

“What’s this poor monk accomplished,” said Tripitaka, “that merits such gratitude?”

Boqin gave a thorough account of the dream that the three of them had and Tripitaka was also very pleased. A vegetarian meal was again served, and a tael of silver was presented as a token of their gratitude. Tripitaka refused to accept so much as a penny, though the whole family begged him earnestly. He only said, “If you can escort me on the first part of my way in compassion, I’ll ever be grateful for such kindness.”

Boqin and his mum and wife had little alternative but hastily to prepare some biscuits from unrefined flour that Tripitaka was glad to accept. Boqin was told to escort him as far as possible. Obeying his mum’s bidding, the Guardian also ordered several houseboys to join them, each bringing hunting equipment and weapons. They walked to the main road, and there seemed to be no end to the scenic splendour of the mountains and peaks. When they had travelled for half a day, they came upon a huge mountain so tall and rugged that it truly seemed to touch the blue sky. In a little while the whole company reached the foot of the mountain, and the Guardian began to ascend it as if he were walking on level ground. Halfway up, Boqin turned around and stood still at the side of the road saying, “Elder, please go on yourself. I must now take leave of you and turn back.”

When Tripitaka heard these words, he rolled down from his saddle and said, “I beg you to escort me a little further.”

“You don’t realise, Elder,” said Boqin, “that this mountain’s called the Mountain of Two Frontiers; the eastern half belongs to our Great Tang domain but the western half’s the territory of the Tartars. The tigers and wolves over there aren’t my subjects, nor I’d cross the border. You must proceed by yourself.”

Tripitaka became fearful; he stretched out his hands and clutched at the sleeves of the hunter, tears pouring from his eyes. It was at this tender moment of farewell that there came from beneath the mountain a thunderous voice crying, “My master’s come! My master’s come!” Tripitaka was dumbfounded and Boqin trembled.

014

***Mind Monkey returns to the Right; The 6 Robbers (Senses) vanish from sight***

*Mind’s a god and a god’s Mind; both Mind and God are important things.*

*If you perceive there’s neither Mind nor Thing, yours is the body true of True Mind.*

*The Body of Truth’s no shape or form: 1 pearl-like radiance holding myriad things.*

*The bodiless body’s the body true and real form’s that form that’s no form.*

*There’s no form, no void, no no-emptiness; no coming, no leaving, no turning towards anyone or bestowal of merit by anyone;*

*No contrast, no sameness, no being or nonbeing: no giving, no taking, no hopeful craving.*

*Light efficacious is in and out the same. God’s whole realm is in a grain of sand.*

*A grain of sand the chiliocosm holds; 1 mind or body’s like 10000 things.*

*To know this you must grasp the No-mind Spell; unclogged and taintless is the karma pure.*

*Don’t do the many acts of good or ill: this is true submission to God.<sup>3</sup>*

Tripitaka and Boqin in fear and alarm again heard the cry, “My Master’s come!”

The various houseboys said, “It must be the old ape in that stone box beneath the mountain who’s shouting.”

“It’s he! It’s he!” said the Guardian.

Tripitaka asked, “Who’s this old ape?”

“The ancient name of this mountain’s,” said the Guardian, “the Mountain of Five Phases. It’s changed to the Mountain of the Two Frontiers as a result of our Great Tang ruler’s western campaigns to secure his empire. A few years ago, I heard from my elders that during the time when Wang Mang usurped the throne of the Han emperor, this mountain fell from Heaven with a divine monkey clamped beneath it. He feared neither heat nor cold and took neither food nor drink. He’d been watched, guarded by the spirits of the Earth who fed him iron balls when he’s hungry, and juices of bronze when he’s thirsty. He’s lasted from that time until now surviving both cold and hunger. He must be the one who’s making all this noise. Don’t be afraid, elder. Let’s go down the mountain to take a look.”

Tripitaka had to agree and led his horse down the mountain. They had travelled only a few miles when they came upon a stone box in which there was indeed a monkey who was waving his hands wildly with his head sticking out and crying, “Master, why you’ve taken so long to get here? Welcome! Welcome! Get me out and I’ll protect you on your way to the Western Heaven!”

The priest went forward to look more closely at him. He had a *pointed mouth and hollow cheeks; 2 diamond pupils and fiery eyes. Lichens had piled on his head; wisteria grew in his ears. By his temples was more green grass than hair; beneath his chin, moss instead of a beard. With mud on his brow and earth in his nose, he looked most desperate! His fingers coarse and calloused palms were caked in filth and dirt!* Luckily, his eyes could still roll about and the apish tongue, articulate. Though in speech he had great ease, his body he could not move. He was the Great Sage Sun of 5 centuries ago. Today his ordeal ends, he leaves Heaven’s net. Undeniably a courageous person, that Guardian Liu went up to the creature and pulled away some of the grass at his temples and some of the moss beneath his chin. He asked, “What do you’ve to say?”

“Nothing to you,” said the monkey, “but ask that master to come up here. I’ve a question for him.”

“What’s your question?” asked Tripitaka. “Are you someone sent by the great king of the Land of the East to go seek scriptures in the Western Heaven?” asked the monkey. “I’m,” said Tripitaka. “Why do you ask?”

“I’m the Great Sage Equal to Heaven,” said the monkey, “who greatly disturbed the Heavenly Palace five centuries ago. Because of my sin of rebellion and disobedience, I was imprisoned here by a god. Some time ago, a certain Nun Guanyin had received the decree of God to go to the Land of the East in quest of a scripture pilgrim. I asked her to give me some help, and she persuaded me not to engage again in violence. I was told to believe in the Law of God and faithfully to protect the scripture pilgrim on his way to worship God in the West, for there would be a goodly reward reserved for me when such merit is achieved. I’ve therefore been maintaining my vigilance night and day, waiting for the Master to come to rescue me. I’m willing to protect you in your quest of scriptures and become your disciple.”

When Tripitaka heard these words, he was filled with delight and said, “Though you’ve this good intention of entering our Religious fold, thanks to the Nun’s instruction, I’ve neither axe nor drill. How can I free you?”

“No need for axe or drill,” said the monkey.

“If you’re willing to rescue me, I’ll be able to get out.”

Tripitaka said, “I’m willing but how can you get out?”

“On top of this mountain,” said the monkey, “there’s a tag stamped with the golden letters of our Nun who’s thus come and gone. Go up there and lift up the tag. Then I’ll come out.”

Tripitaka agreed and turned to Boqin, imploring him, “Guardian, come with me up the mountain.”

“Do you think he’s speaking the truth?” asked Boqin.

“It’s the truth!” the monkey shouted. “I daren’t lie!” Boqin had no choice but to call his houseboys to lead the horses. He himself supported Tripitaka with his hands, and they again started up the tall mountain. Tugging at creepers and vines, they finally arrived at the highest peak where they beheld 10000 shafts of golden light and 1000 folds of hallowed air. There was a huge square slab of stone on which was taped a seal with the golden letters:

*Praise to the Jewel in the Lotus*

Tripitaka approached the stone and knelt down; he looked at the golden letters and respected several times to the stone. Then facing the West, he prayed: “Your disciple, Chen Xuanzang’s specifically commanded to seek scriptures from you. If it’s so ordained that he’d be my disciple, let me lift up those golden letters so that the divine monkey may find release and join me at the Spirit Mountain. If he isn’t predestined to be my disciple, if he’s only a cruel monster trying to deceive me and bring misfortune to our enterprise, let me not lift up this tape.”

He respected again after he had prayed. Going forward with the greatest of ease he took down the golden letters. A fragrant wind swept by immediately and blew the tag out of his hands into the air as a voice called out, “I’m the prison guard of the Great Sage. Today his ordeal’s completed. My colleagues and I are returning this seal to Siddhartha.”

Tripitaka, Boqin, and their followers were so terrified that they fell on the ground and saluted toward the sky. They then descended from the tall mountain and came back to the stone box saying to the monkey, “The tag’s been lifted. You may come out.”

Delighted, the monkey said, “Master, you’d better walk away from here so that I can come out. I don’t want to frighten you.” When Boqin heard this, he led Tripitaka and the rest of the company to walk back eastward for 5 or 6 miles. Again they heard the monkey yelling, “Further still! Further still!” So Tripitaka and the others went still further until they had left the mountain. All at once came a crash so loud that it was as if the mountain was cracking and the earth splitting wide open; everyone was awestruck. The next moment the monkey was already in front of Tripitaka’s horse; completely naked, he knelt down and cried, “Master, I’m out!” He saluted 4 times toward Tripitaka and then jumping up, he said to Boqin respectfully, “I thank Elder Brother for taking the trouble of escorting my master. I’m grateful also for your shaving the grass from my face.”

Having thanked him, he went at once to put the luggage in order so that it could be tied onto the horse’s back. When the horse saw him, its torso slackened and its legs stiffened. In fear and trembling, it could hardly stand up. For that monkey had been a Ban-Horse-Plague who used to look after dragon horses in the celestial stables. His authority was such that horses of this world inevitably would fear him when they saw him.

When Tripitaka saw that the monkey was truly a person of good intentions, someone who truly resembled those who had embraced the Religious faith, he called to him, “Disciple, what is your surname?”

“My surname is Sun,” said the Monkey King. “Let me give you a religious name,” said Tripitaka, “so that it will be convenient to address you.”

“This noble thought of the master is deeply appreciated,” said the Monkey King, “but I already have a religious name. I’m called Sun Wukong.”

“It exactly fits the emphasis of our denomination,” said Tripitaka, delighted. “But look at you, you look rather like a little *dhūta*.<sup>5</sup> Let me give you a nickname and call you Pilgrim Sun.<sup>6</sup> How’s that?”

“Good! Good!” said Wukong.

So from then on, he was also called Pilgrim Sun. When Boqin saw that Pilgrim Sun was definitely preparing to leave, he turned to speak respectfully to Tripitaka, saying, “Elder, you’re fortunate to have made an excellent disciple here. Congratulations! This person should be most fit to accompany you. I must take leave of you now.”

Saluting thank him, Tripitaka said, “I can’t thank you enough for all your kindness. Please be certain to thank your dear mum and wife when you return to your house. I’ve caused you all great inconvenience, and I’ll thank you again on my way back.” Boqin returned his salutation, and they parted.

We’ll now tell you about Pilgrim Sun who asked Tripitaka to mount his horse. He himself, stark naked, carried the luggage on his back and led the way. In a little while, as they were passing the Mountain of Two Frontiers, they saw a fierce tiger approaching, growling and waving its tail. Tripitaka, sitting on his horse, became alarmed but Pilgrim, walking at the side of the road, was delighted. “Don’t be afraid, Master,” he said, “for he’s here to present me with some clothes.” He put down the luggage and took a tiny needle out of his ears. One wave of it facing the wind, and it became an iron rod with the thickness of a rice bowl. He held it in his hands and laughed, saying, “I’ve not used this treasure for over five centuries! Today I’m taking it out to bag a little garment for myself.” Look at him! He strode right up to the tiger, crying, “Cursed beast! Where do you think you’re going?” Crouching low, the tiger lay prone on the dust and dared not move. Pilgrim Sun aimed the rod at its head, and one stroke caused its brain to burst out like ten thousand red petals of peach blossoms, and the teeth to fly out like so many pieces of white jade. So terrified was our Chen Xuanzang that he fell off his horse. “O God! O God!” he cried, biting his fingers. “When Guardian Liu overcame that striped tiger the other day, he had to do battle with him for almost half a day. But without even fighting today, Sun Wukong reduces the tiger to pulp with one blow of his rod. How true is the saying, ‘For the strong, there’s always someone stronger!’”

“Master,” said Pilgrim as he returned dragging the tiger, “sit down for a while, and wait till I’ve stripped him of his clothes. When I put them on, we’ll start off again.”

“Where does he have any clothes?” asked Tripitaka. “Don’t mind me, Master,” said Pilgrim, “I’ve my own plan.” Dear Monkey King! He pulled off one strand of hair and blew a mouthful of magic breath onto it, crying, “Change!” It changed into a sharp, curved knife with which he ripped open the tiger’s chest. Slitting the skin straight down, he then ripped it off in one piece. He chopped away the paws and the head, cutting the skin into one square piece. He picked it up and tried it for size, and then said, “It’s a bit too large; one piece can be made into two.” He took the knife and cut it again into two pieces; he put one of these away and wrapped the other around his waist. Ripping off a strand of rattan from the side of the road, he firmly tied on this covering for the lower part of his body. “Master,” he said, “let’s go! Let’s go! When we reach someone’s house, we’ll have sufficient time to borrow some threads and a needle to sew this up.” He gave his iron rod a squeeze and it changed back into a tiny needle that he stored in his ear. Throwing the luggage on his back, he asked his Master to mount the horse.

As they set off, the monk asked him, “Wukong, how is it that the iron rod you used to slay the tiger has disappeared?” “Master,” said Pilgrim laughing, “you’ve no idea what that rod of mine really is. It was acquired originally from the Dragon Palace in the Eastern Ocean. It’s called the Precious Divine Iron for Guarding the Heavenly River, and another name of it is the Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod. At the time when I revolted against Heaven, I depended on it a great deal; for it could change into any shape or form, great or small, according to my wish. Just now I’d it changed into a tiny embroidery needle, and it’s stored that way in my ear. When I need it, I’ll take it out.” Secretly pleased by what he heard, Tripitaka asked another question: “Why did that tiger become completely motionless when it saw you? How do you explain the fact that it simply let you hit it?” “To tell you the truth,” said Wukong, “even a dragon, let alone this tiger, would behave itself if it had seen me! I, old monkey, possess the ability to subdue dragons and tame tigers, and the power to overturn rivers and stir up oceans. I can look at a person’s countenance and discern his character; I can listen merely to sounds and discover the truth. If I want to be big, I can fill the universe; if I want to be small, I can be smaller than a piece of hair. In sum, I’ve boundless ways of transformation and incalculable means of becoming visible or invisible. What’s so strange, then, about my skinning a tiger? Wait till we come to some real difficulties – you’ll see my talents then!” When Tripitaka heard these words, he was more relieved than ever and urged his horse forward. So master and disciple, the 2 of them chatted as they journeyed and soon the sun sank in the west. See *soft glow of the fading twilight and distant clouds slowly returning. On every hill swells the chorus of birds, flocking to shelter in the woods. The wild beasts in couples and pairs in packs and groups they trek homeward. The new moon, hook-like, breaks the spreading gloom with 10000 stars luminous.* <sup>7</sup>Pilgrim said, “Master, let’s move along, for it’s getting late. There are dense clumps of trees over there, and I suppose there must be a house or village too. Let’s hurry over there and ask for lodging.” Urging his horse forward, Tripitaka went straight up to a house and dismounted. Pilgrim threw down the bag and went to the door, crying, “Open up! Open up!” An old man came to the door, leaning on a cane. When he pulled open the creaking door, he was panic-stricken by the hideous appearance of Pilgrim who had the tiger skin around his waist and looked like a thunder god. He began to shout, “A ghost! A ghost!” and other such foolish words. Tripitaka drew near and took hold of him saying, “Old Patron, don’t be afraid. He’s my disciple, not a ghost.”

Only when he looked up and saw the handsome features of Tripitaka did the old man stand still. “Which temple are you from,” he asked, “and why’re you bringing such a nasty character to my door?” “I’m a poor monk from the Tang court,” said Tripitaka, “on my way to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven. We’re passing through here and it’s getting late; that’s why we made as bold as to approach your great mansion and beg you for a night’s lodging. We plan to leave tomorrow before it’s light and beseech you not to deny our request.” “Though you may be a Tang man,” the old man said, “that nasty character’s certainly no Tang man!” “Old fellow!” cried Wukong in a loud voice, “you really can’t see, can you? The Tang man’s my master and I’m his disciple. Of course, I’m no sugar man<sup>8</sup> or honey man! I’m the Great Sage Equal to Heaven! The members of your family should recognise me. Moreover, I’ve seen you before.” “Where’ve you seen me before?” “When you’re young,” said Wukong, “didn’t you gather firewood before my eyes? Didn’t you haul vegetables before my face?” The old man said, “That’s nonsense! Where did you live? And where’s I that I’d have gathered firewood and hauled vegetables before your eyes?” “Only my son would talk nonsense!” said Wukong. “You really don’t recognise me! Take a closer look! I’m the Great Sage in the stone box of this Mountain of Two Frontiers.” “You do look somewhat like him,” said the old man, half recognising the figure before him, “but how did you get out?” Wukong thereupon gave a thorough account of how the Nun had converted him and how she had asked him to wait for the Tang Monk to lift the tag for his deliverance. After that, the old man saluted deeply and invited Tripitaka in, calling for his aged wife and his children to come out and meet the guests. When he told them what had happened, everyone was delighted. Tea was then served, after which the old man asked Wukong, “How old are you, Great Sage?” “And how old are you?” asked Wukong.

“I’ve lived foolishly for a hundred-thirty years!” said the old man. “You’re still my great-great-great-great-grandson!” said Pilgrim. “I can’t remember when I was born but I’ve spent over five centuries underneath this mountain.” “Yes, yes,” said the old man. “I remember my great-grandpa saying that when this mountain dropped from the sky, it had a divine ape clamped underneath it. To think that you’d have waited until now for your freedom! When I saw you in my childhood, you had grass on your head and mud on your face but I wasn’t afraid of you then. Now without mud on your face and grass on your head, you seem a bit thinner. And with that huge piece of tiger skin draped around your waist, what great difference is there between you and a demon?” When the members of his family heard this remark, they all roared with laughter. Being a rather decent fellow, that old man at once ordered a vegetarian meal to be prepared. Afterwards Wukong said, “What is your family name?”

“Our humble family,” said the old man, “goes by the name of Chen.” When Tripitaka heard this, he left his seat to salute him, saying, “Old Patron, you and I share the same illustrious clan.”<sup>9</sup> “Master,” said Pilgrim, “your surname is Tang. How can it be that you and he share the same illustrious ancestors?” Tripitaka said, “The surname of my secular family is also Chen, and I come from the Juxian Village, in the Hongnong District of Haizhou in the Tang domain. My religious name is Chen Xuanzang. Because our Great Tang Emperor Taizong made me his brother by decree, I took the name Tripitaka and used Tang as my surname. Hence I’m called the Tang Monk.” The old man was very pleased to hear that they had the same surname. “Old Chen,” said Pilgrim, “I must trouble your family some more, for I’ve not taken a bath for five centuries! Please go and boil some water so that my master and I, his disciple, can wash ourselves. We’ll thank you all the more when we leave.” The old man at once gave the order for water to be boiled and basins to be brought in with several lamps. As master and disciple sat before the lamps after their baths, Pilgrim said, “Old Chen, I still have one more favour to ask of you. Can you lend me a needle and some thread?” “Of course, of course,” replied the old man. 1 of the amahs was told to fetch the needle and thread that were then handed over to Pilgrim. Pilgrim had the keenest sight; he noticed that Tripitaka had taken off a shirt made of white cloth and had not put it on again after his bath. Pilgrim grabbed it and put it on himself. Taking off his tiger skin, he sewed the hems together using a *horse-face fold*<sup>10</sup> and fastened it round his waist again with the strand of rattan. He paraded in front of his master saying, “How does old monkey look today compared with the way he looked yesterday?”

“Very good,” said Tripitaka, “very good! Now you do look like a pilgrim! If you don’t think that the shirt is too worn or old, you may keep it.” “Thanks for the gift!” said Wukong respectfully. He then went out to find some hay to feed the horse, after which master and disciple both retired with the old man and his household. The next morning Wukong arose and woke up his master to get ready for the journey. Tripitaka dressed himself while Wukong put their luggage in order. They were about to leave when the old man brought in washing water and some vegetarian food, and so they did not set out until after the meal. Tripitaka rode his horse with Pilgrim leading the way; they journeyed by day and rested by night, taking food and drink according to their needs. Soon it was early winter. See *frost-blighted maples and the wizened trees; few verdant pine and cypress still on the ridge. Budding plum blossoms spread their gentle scent. The brief, warm day – a Little Spring gift! <sup>11</sup>But dying lilies yield to the lush wild tea. A cold bridge struggles against an old tree’s bough and gurgling water flows in the winding brook. Grey clouds, snow-laden, float throughout the sky. The strong, cold wind tears at the sleeve! How does one bear this chilly might of night?*<sup>12</sup> Master and disciple had travelled for some time when suddenly six men jumped out from the side of the road with much clamour, all holding long spears and short swords, sharp blades and strong bows. “Stop, monk!” they cried. “Leave your horse and drop your bag at once and we’ll let you pass on alive!” Tripitaka was so terrified that his soul left him and his spirit fled; he fell from his horse, unable to utter a word. But Pilgrim lifted him up, saying, “Don’t be alarmed, Master. It’s nothing really, just some people coming to give us clothes and a travel allowance!”

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “you must be a little hard of hearing! They told us to leave our bag and our horse, and you want to ask them for clothes and a travel allowance?” “You just stay here and watch our belongings,” said Pilgrim, “and let old monkey confront them. We’ll see what happens.” Tripitaka said, “Even a good punch is no match for a pair of fists, and two fists can’t cope with four hands! There are six big fellows over there, and you’re such a tiny person. How can you’ve the nerve to confront them?” As he always had been audacious, Pilgrim did not wait for further discussion. He walked forward with arms folded and saluted the six men, saying, “Sirs, for what reason are you blocking the path of this poor monk?”

“We’re kings of the highway,” said the men, “philanthropic mountain lords. Our fame has long been known, though you seem to be ignorant of it. Leave your belongings at once, and you’ll be allowed to pass. If you but utter half a no, you’ll be chopped to pieces!” “I’ve been also a great hereditary king and a mountain lord for centuries,” said Pilgrim, “but I’ve yet to learn of your illustrious names.” “So you really don’t know!” one of them said. “Let’s tell you then: one of us is named Eye That Sees and Delights; another, Ear That Hears and Rages; another Nose That Smells and Loves; another, Tongue That Tastes and Desires; another, Mind That Perceives and Covets; and another, Body That Bears and Suffers.” “You’e nothing but six hairy brigands,” said Wukong laughing, “who’ve failed to recognise in me a person who’s left the family, your proper master. How dare you bar my way? Bring out the treasures you’ve stolen so that you and I can divide them into seven portions. I’ll spare you then!”

Hearing this, the robbers all reacted with rage and amusement, covetousness and fear, desire and anxiety. They rushed forward crying, “You reckless monk! You’ve not a thing to offer us, and yet you want us to share our loot with you!” Wielding spears and swords, they surrounded Pilgrim and hacked away at his head seventy or eighty times. Pilgrim stood in their midst and behaved as if nothing were happening.

“What a monk!” said one of the robbers. “He really does have a hard head!” “Passably so!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “But your hands must be getting tired from all that exercise; it’s about time for old monkey to take out his needle for a little entertainment.” “This monk must be an acupuncture man in disguise,” said the robber. “We’re not sick! What’s all this about using a needle?” Pilgrim reached into his ear and took out a tiny embroidery needle; one wave of it in the wind and it became an iron rod with the thickness of a rice bowl. He held it in his hands, saying, “Don’t run! Let old monkey try his hand on you with this rod!” The six robbers fled in all directions but with great strides he caught up with them and rounded all of them up. He beat every one of them to death, stripped them of their clothes, and seized their valuables. Then Pilgrim came back smiling broadly and said, “You may proceed now, Master. Those robbers have been exterminated by old monkey.”

“That’s a terrible thing you’ve done!” said Tripitaka. “They may have been strong men on the highway but they’d not have been sentenced to death even if they’d been caught and tried. If you’ve such abilities, you’d have chased them away. Why did you slay them all? How can you be a monk when you take life without cause? We who’ve left the family should *keep ants out of harm’s way when we sweep the floor and put shades on lamps for the love of moths*. How can you kill them just like that without regard for black or white? You showed no mercy at all! It’s a good thing that we’re here in the mountains where no further investigation will be likely. But suppose someone offends you when we reach a city and you perpetrate violence again, hitting people indiscriminately with that rod of yours – I’d be able to remain innocent and get away scot-free?”

“Master,” said Wukong, “if I’d not killed them, they’d have killed you!” Tripitaka said, “As a priest, I’d rather die than practice violence. If I were killed, there’d be only one of me but you slaughtered six persons. How can you justify that? If this matter were brought before a judge and even if your old man were the judge, you’d certainly be unable to justify your action.” “To tell you the truth, Master,” said Pilgrim, “when I, old monkey’s king on the Flower-Fruit Mountain five centuries ago, I killed I don’t know how many people. I’d not have been a Great Sage Equal to Heaven, if I’d lived by what you’re saying.”

“It’s precisely because you had neither scruples nor self-control,” said Tripitaka, “unleashing your waywardness on Earth and spreading outrage in Heaven that you had to undergo this ordeal of five centuries. Now that you’ve entered the fold of Religion, if you still insist on practicing violence and indulge in the taking of life as before, you’re not worthy to be a monk, nor can you go to the Western Heaven. You’re wicked! You’re just too wicked!” Now this monkey had never in all his life been able to tolerate scolding. When he heard Tripitaka’s persistent reprimand, he could not suppress the flames leaping up in his heart. “If that’s what you think,” he said. “If you think I’m not worthy to be a monk, nor can I go to the Western Heaven, you needn’t bother me further with your nagging! I’ll leave and go back!” Before Tripitaka had time to reply, Pilgrim was already so enraged that he leaped into the air, crying only, “Old monkey’s off!” Tripitaka quickly raised his head to look but the monkey had already disappeared, trailed only by a swishing sound fading fast toward the East. Left by himself, the priest could only shake his head and sigh, “That fellow! He’s so unwilling to be taught! I only said a few words to him. How could he vanish without a trace and go back just like that? Well, well, well! It must be also that I’m destined not to have a disciple or any other companion, for now I’d not even call him or locate him if I wanted to. I might as well go on by myself!”

So he was prepared to *lay down his life and go toward the West, be his own master and on none rely*. The elder had little alternative but to pack up his bag and put it on the horse that he did not even bother to mount. Holding his staff in one hand and the reins in the other, he set off sadly toward the West. He had not travelled far when he saw an old woman before him on the mountain road, holding a silk garment and a cap with a floral design. When Tripitaka saw her approach, he hastened to pull his horse aside for her to pass. “Elder where do you come from,” asked the old woman, “and why are you walking here all by yourself?”

Tripitaka replied, “Your child’s sent by the Great King of the Land of the East to seek true scriptures from the living God in the Western Heaven.”



“A god of the West,” said the old woman, “lives in the Great Temple of Thunderclap in the territory of India, and the journey there is one hundred and eight thousand miles long. You’re all by yourself with neither a companion nor a disciple. How can you possibly think of going there?”

“A few days ago,” said Tripitaka, “I did pick up a disciple, a rather unruly and headstrong character. I scolded him a little but he refused to be taught, and disappeared.” The old woman said, “I’ve here a silk shirt and a flower cap inlaid with gold that used to belong to my son. He had been a monk for only three days when unfortunately he died. I’ve just finished mourning him at the temple where I was given these things by his master to be kept in his memory. Dad, since you’ve a disciple, I’ll give the shirt and the cap to you.”

“I’m most grateful for your lavish gifts,” said Tripitaka, “but my disciple has left. I dare not take them.”

“Where did he go?” asked the old woman. Tripitaka replied, “I heard a swishing sound heading toward the east.”

“My home is not too far away in the east,” said the old woman, “and he may be going there. I’ve a spell which is called the True Words for Controlling the Mind, or the Tight-Fillet Spell. You must memorize it secretly; commit it firmly to your memory, and don’t let anyone learn of it. I’ll try to catch up with him and persuade him to come back and follow you. When he returns, give him the shirt and the cap to wear; and if he again refuses to obey you, recite the spell silently. He will not dare do violence or leave you again.”

On hearing these words, Tripitaka saluted his head to thank her. The old woman changed herself into a shaft of golden light and vanished toward the east. Then Tripitaka realised that it was the Nun Guanyin who had taught him the True Words; he hurriedly picked up a few pinches of earth with his fingers and scattered them like incense, saluting reverently toward the East. He then took the shirt and the cap and hid them in his bag. Sitting beside the road, he began to recite the True Words for Controlling the Mind. After a few times, he knew it thoroughly by heart. Wukong having left his master, headed straight toward the Eastern Ocean with a single cloud somersault. He stopped his cloud, opened up a path in the water, and went directly to the Water Crystal Palace. Learning of his arrival, the Dragon King came out to welcome him. After they had exchanged greetings and sat down, the Dragon King said, “I heard recently that the ordeal of the Great Sage had been completed, and I apologise for not having congratulated you yet. I suppose you’ve again taken occupancy in your mortal mountain and returned to the ancient cave.”

“I was so inclined,” said Wukong, “but I became a monk instead.”

“What sort of a monk?” asked the Dragon King. “I was indebted to the Nun of South Sea,” said Pilgrim, “who persuaded me to do good and seek the truth. I was to follow the Tang Monk from the Land of the East to go worship God in the West. Since entering the fold of Religion, I was given also the name ‘Pilgrim.’”

“That is indeed praiseworthy!” said the Dragon King. “You’ve, as we say, left the wrong and followed the right; you’ve been created anew by setting your mind on goodness. But if that’s the case, why are you not going toward the West but are returning eastward instead?”

Pilgrim laughed and said, “That Tang Monk knows nothing of human nature! There were a few ruffians who wanted to rob us, and I slew them all. But that Tang Monk couldn’t stop nagging me, telling me over and over how wrong I was. Can you imagine old monkey putting up with that sort of tedium? I just left him! I was on my way back to my mountain when I decided to come visit you and ask for a cup of tea.”

“Thanks for coming! Thanks for coming!” exclaimed the Dragon King. At that moment, the Dragon sons and grandsons presented them with aromatic tea. When they finished the tea, Pilgrim happened to turn around and saw hanging behind him on the wall a painting on the “Presentation of Shoes at Yi Bridge.”

“What’s this all about?” asked Pilgrim. The Dragon King replied, “The incident depicted in the painting took place sometime after you’re born, and you may not recognise what it was – the threefold presentation of shoes at Yi Bridge.”

“What do you mean by the threefold presentation of shoes?” asked Pilgrim.

“The mortal in the painting,” said the Dragon King, “was named Huang Shigong,<sup>13</sup> and the young man kneeling in front of him was called Zhang Liang. <sup>14</sup>Shigong was sitting on the Yi Bridge when suddenly one of his shoes fell off and dropped under the bridge. He asked Zhang Liang to fetch it, and the young man quickly did so, putting it back on for him as he knelt there. This happened three times. Since Zhang Liang did not display the slightest sign of pride or impatience, he won the affection of Shigong who imparted to him that night a celestial manual and told him to support the house of Han. Afterwards, Zhang Liang ‘made his plans sitting in a military tent to achieve victories a thousand miles away.’<sup>15</sup> When the Han dynasty was established, he left his post and went into the mountains where he followed the Daoist, Master Red Pine,<sup>16</sup> and became enlightened in the way of mortality. Great Sage, if you don’t accompany the Tang Monk, if you’re unwilling to exercise diligence or to accept instruction, you’ll remain a bogus mortal after all. Don’t think that you’ll ever acquire the Fruits of Truth.”

Wukong listened to these words and fell silent for some time. The Dragon King said, “Great Sage, you must make the decision yourself. It’s unwise to allow short comfort to jeopardize your future.”

“Not another word!” said Wukong. “Old monkey will go back to accompany him, that’s all!” Delighted, the Dragon King said, “If that’s your wish, I dare not detain you. Instead, I ask the Great Sage to show his mercy at once and not permit his master to wait any longer.” When Pilgrim heard this exhortation to leave, he bounded right out of the oceanic region; mounting the clouds, he left the Dragon King.

On his way he ran right into the Nun of South Sea. “Sun Wukong,” said the Nun, “why did you not listen to me and accompany the Tang Monk? What are you doing here?” Pilgrim was so taken aback that he saluted her on top of the clouds. “I’m most grateful for the kind words of the Nun,” he said. “A monk from the Tang court did appear, lifted the seal, and saved my life. I became his disciple but he blamed me for being too violent. I walked out on him for a little while but I’m going back right now to accompany him.”

“Go quickly then,” said the Nun, “before you change your mind again.” They finished speaking and each went on his way. In a moment, our Pilgrim saw the Tang Monk sitting dejectedly at the side of the road. He approached him and said, “Master, why are you not on the road? What are you doing here?”

“Where have you been?” asked Tripitaka, looking up. “Your absence has forced me to sit here and wait for you, not daring to walk or move.” Pilgrim replied, “I just went to the home of the old Dragon King at the Eastern Ocean to ask for some tea.”

“Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “those who have left the family should not lie. It was less than an hour since you left me, and you claim to have had tea at the home of the Dragon King?”

“To tell you the truth,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “I know how to cloud somersault, and a single somersault will carry me one hundred and eight thousand miles. That’s why I can go and return in no time at all.” Tripitaka said, “Because I spoke to you a little sharply, you’re offended and left me in a rage. With your ability, you’d go and ask for some tea but a person like me has no other prospect but to sit here and endure hunger. Do you feel comfortable about that?”

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “if you’re hungry, I’ll go beg some food for you.”

“There’s no need to beg,” said Tripitaka, “for I still have in my bag some dried goods given to me by the mum of Guardian Liu. Fetch me some water in that bowl. I’ll eat some food and we can start out again.”

Pilgrim went to untie the bag and found some biscuits made of unrefined flour that he took out and handed over to the master. He then saw light glowing from a silk shirt and a flower cap inlaid with gold. “Did you bring this garment and cap from the Land of the East?” he asked. “I wore these in my childhood,” said Tripitaka nonchalantly. “If you wear the hat, you’ll know how to recite scriptures without having to learn them; if you put on the garment, you’ll know how to perform rituals without having to practice them.”

“Dear Master,” said Pilgrim, “let me put them on.”

“They may not fit you,” said Tripitaka, “but if they do, you may wear them.” Pilgrim thereupon took off his old shirt made of white cloth and put on the silk shirt that seemed to have been made especially for him. Then he put on the cap as well. When Tripitaka saw that he had put on the cap, he stopped eating the dried goods and began to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell silently.

“Oh, my head!” cried Pilgrim. “It hurts! It hurts!” The master went through the recitation several times without ceasing, and the pain was so intense that Pilgrim was rolling on the ground, his hands gripping the flower cap inlaid with gold. Fearing that he might break the gold fillet, Tripitaka stopped reciting and the pain ceased. Pilgrim touched his head with his hand and felt that it was tightly bound by a thin metal band; it could be neither pulled off nor ripped apart, for it had, as it were, taken root on his head. Taking the needle out of his ear, he rammed it inside the fillet and started prying madly. Afraid that he might break the fillet with his prying, Tripitaka started his recitation again and Pilgrim’s head began to hurt once more. It was so painful that he did cartwheels and somersaults. His face and even his ears turned red, his eyes bulged, and his body grew weak. When the master saw his appearance, he was moved to break off his recitation, and the pain stopped as before. “My head,” said Pilgrim, “the master has put a spell on it.”

“I was just saying the Tight-Fillet *Thread*,” said Tripitaka. “Since when did I put a spell on you?”

“Recite it some more and see what happens,” said Pilgrim. Tripitaka accordingly began to recite, and the Pilgrim immediately started to hurt. “Stop! Stop!” he cried. “I hurt the moment you begin to recite. How do you explain that?”

“Will you listen now to my instructions?” asked Tripitaka.

“Yes, I’ll,” replied Pilgrim. “And never be unruly again?”

“I daren’t,” said Pilgrim.

Although he said that with his mouth, Pilgrim’s mind was still devising evil. One wave of the needle and it had the thickness of a rice bowl; he aimed it at the Tang Monk and was about to slam it down on him. The priest was so startled that he went through the recitation two or three more times. Falling to the ground, the monkey threw away the iron rod and could not even raise his hands. “Master,” he said, “I’ve learned my lesson! Stop! Please stop!”

“How dare you be so reckless,” said Tripitaka, “that you’d want to strike me?”

“I’d not dare strike you,” said Pilgrim, “but let me ask you something. Who taught you this magic?”

“It was an old woman,” said Tripitaka, “who imparted it to me a few moments ago.” Growing very angry, Pilgrim said, “You needn’t say anything more! The old woman had to be that Guanshiyin! Why did she want me to suffer like this? I’m going to South Sea to beat her up!”

“If she had taught me this magic,” said Tripitaka, “she had to know it even before I did. If you go looking for her, and she starts her recitation, won’t you be dead?” Pilgrim saw the logic of this and dared not remove himself. Indeed, he had no alternative but to kneel in contrition and plead with Tripitaka, saying, “Master, this is her method of controlling me, allowing me no alternative but to follow you to the West. I’ll not go to bother her but you must not regard this spell as a plaything for frequent recitation either! I’m willing to accompany you without ever entertaining the thought of leaving again.”

“If that’s so,” said Tripitaka, “help me onto the horse and let’s get going.” At that point, Pilgrim gave up all thoughts of disobedience or rebellion. Eagerly he tugged at his silk shirt and went to gather the luggage together and they headed again toward the West.

## 015

### ***At Serpent Coil Mountain, the gods give secret protection; At Eagle Grief Stream, the Horse of the Will is reined***

Pilgrim who ministered to the Tang Monk faithfully as they advanced toward the West. They travelled for several days under the frigid sky of midwinter; a cold wind blew fiercely, and slippery icicles hung everywhere. They traversed *a tortuous path of hanging gorges and cliffs, a parlous range tiered with summits and peaks*. As Tripitaka was riding along on his horse, his ears caught the distant sound of a torrent. He turned to ask: “Wukong where’s that sound coming from?”

Pilgrim said, “I recall the name of this place’s Serpent Coil Mountain and there’s an Eagle Grief Stream in it. I suppose that’s where it’s coming from.” Before they had finished their conversation, they arrived at the bank of the stream. Tripitaka reined in his horse and looked around. He saw *a bubbling cold stream piercing through the clouds, its limpid current reddened by the sun. Its splatter in night rain stirs quiet vales; colours glow at dawn to fill the air. Wave after wave seems like flying chips of jade, their deep roar resonant as the clear wind. It flows to join one vast stretch of smoke and tide where gulls are lost with egrets but no fishers bide*. Master and disciple were looking at the stream, when there was a loud splash in midstream and a dragon emerged. Churning the waters, it darted toward the bank and headed straight for the priest. Pilgrim was so startled that he threw away the luggage, hauled the master off his horse, and turned to flee with him at once. The dragon could not catch up with them but it swallowed the white horse, harness and all with one gulp before losing itself again in the water. Pilgrim carried his master to high ground and left the priest seated there; then he returned to fetch the horse and the luggage. The load of bags was still there but the horse was nowhere to be seen. Placing the luggage in front of his master, he said, “Master, there’s not a trace of that cursed dragon that’s frightened away our horse.”

“Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “how can we find the horse again?”

“Relax! Relax!” said Pilgrim. “Let me go and have a look!”

He whistled once and leaped up into the air. Shading his fiery eyes and diamond pupils with his hand, he peered in all four directions but there was not the slightest trace of the horse. Dropping down from the clouds, he made his report, saying, “Master, our horse must have been eaten by that dragon. It’s nowhere to be seen!”

“Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “how big a mouth does that creature have that he can swallow a horse, harness and all? It must have been frightened away instead, probably still running loose somewhere in the valley. Please take another look.” Pilgrim said, “You really have no conception of my ability. This pair of eyes of mine in daylight can discern good and evil within a thousand miles; at that distance, I can even see a dragonfly when it spreads its wings. How can I possibly miss something as big as a horse?”

"If it has been eaten," said Tripitaka, "how am I to proceed? Pity me! How can I walk through those thousand hills and ten thousand waters?" As he spoke, tears began to fall like rain. When Pilgrim saw him crying, he became infuriated and began to shout: "Master, stop behaving like a namby-pamby! Sit here! Just sit here! Let old monkey find that creature and ask him to give us back our horse. That'll be the end of the matter." Clutching at him, Tripitaka said, "Disciple where do you've to go to find him? Wouldn't I be hurt if he should appear from somewhere after you're gone? How would it be then if both man and horse should perish?" At these words, Pilgrim became even more enraged. "You're a weakling! Truly a weakling!" he thundered. "You want a horse to ride on, and yet you'll not let me go. You want to sit here and grow old, watching our bags?"

As he was yelling angrily like this, he heard someone calling out in mid-air: "Great Sage Sun, don't be annoyed. And stop crying, Royal Brother of Tang. We're a band of deities sent by the Nun Guanyin to give secret protection to the scripture pilgrim." Hearing this, the priest hastily saluted to the ground. "Which divinities are you?" asked Pilgrim. "Tell me your names, so that I can check you off the roll."

"We're the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of light," they said, "the Guardians of Five Points, the Four Sentinels, and the Eighteen Protectors of Monasteries. Every one of us waits upon you in rotation."

"Which one of you'll begin today?" asked Pilgrim. "The gods of Darkness and Light," they said, "to be followed by the Sentinels and the Protectors. We Guardians of Five Points with the exception of the Golden-Headed Guardian, will be here somewhere night and day."

"That being the case," said Pilgrim, "those not on duty may retire but the first Six Gods of Darkness, the Day Sentinel, and the Guardians should remain to protect my master. Let old monkey go find that cursed dragon in the stream and ask him for our horse." The various deities obeyed. Only then did Tripitaka feel somewhat relieved as he sat on the cliff and told Pilgrim to be careful. "Just don't worry," said Pilgrim. Dear Monkey King! He tightened the belt around his silk shirt, hitched up his tiger-skin kilt, and went straight toward the gorge of the stream holding the golden-hooped iron rod. Standing halfway between cloud and fog, he cried loudly on top of the water, "Lawless lizard! Return my horse! Return my horse!"

We now tell you about the dragon who, having eaten the white horse of Tripitaka, was lying on the bottom of the stream, subduing his spirit and nourishing his nature. When he heard someone demanding the horse with abusive language however, he could not restrain the fire leaping up in his heart and he jumped up quickly. Churning the waves, he darted out of the water, saying, "Who dares to insult me here with his big mouth?" Pilgrim saw him and cried ferociously, "Don't run away! Return my horse!" Wielding his rod, he aimed at the beast's head and struck while the dragon attacked with open jaws and dancing claws. The battle between the two of them before the stream was indeed fierce. See *the dragon extending sharp daws: the monkey lifting his rod. The whiskers of this one hung like white jade threads; the eyes of that one shone like red-gold lamps. The mouth beneath the whiskers of that one belched coloured mists: the iron rod in the hands of this one moved like a fierce wind. That 1 was a cursed son who brought his parents grief; this 1 was a monster who defied the gods on high. Both had to suffer because of their plight. They now want to win so each displays his might.* Back and forth, round and round, they fought for a long time, until the dragon grew weak and could fight no longer. He turned and darted back into the water; plunging to the bottom of the stream, he refused to come out again. The Monkey King heaped insult upon insult but the dragon only pretended to be deaf. Pilgrim had little choice but to return to Tripitaka, saying, "Master, that monster made his appearance as a result of my tongue-lashing. He fought with me for a long time before taking fright and running. He's hiding in the water now and refuses to come out again."

"Do you know for certain that it was he who ate my horse?" asked Tripitaka.

"Listen to the way you talk!" said Pilgrim. "If he hadn't eaten it, would he be willing to face me and answer me like that?"

"The time you killed the tiger," said Tripitaka, "you claimed that you had the ability to tame dragons and subdue tigers. Why can't you subdue this one today?" As the monkey had a rather low tolerance for any kind of provocation, this single taunt of Tripitaka so aroused him that he said, "Not one word more! Let me go and show him who is master!"

With great leaps, our Monkey King bounded right to the edge of the stream. Using his magic of overturning seas and rivers, he transformed the clear, limpid water of the Eagle Grief Stream into the muddy currents of the Yellow River during high tide. The cursed dragon in the depth of the stream could neither sit nor lie still for a single moment. He thought to himself: "Just as 'Blessing never repeats itself, so misfortune never comes singly!' It has been barely a year since I escaped execution by Heaven and came to bide my time here but now I've to run into this wretched monster who is trying to do me harm." Look at him! The more he thought about the matter, the more irritated he became. Unable to bear it any longer, he gritted his teeth and leaped out of the water, crying, "What kind of monster are you, and where do you come from, that you want to oppress me like this?"

"Never mind where I come from," said Pilgrim. "Just return the horse, and I'll spare your life."

"I've swallowed your horse into my stomach," said the dragon, "so how am I to throw it up? What are you going to do if I can't return it to you?" Pilgrim said, "If you don't give back the horse, just watch for this rod. Only when your life becomes a payment for my horse will there be an end to this matter!"

The 2 of them again waged a bitter struggle below the mountain ridge. After a few rounds however, the little dragon just could hold out no longer; shaking his body, he changed himself into a tiny water snake and wriggled into the marshes. The Monkey King came rushing up with his rod and parted the grass to look for the snake but there was not a trace of it. He was so exasperated that the spirits of the 3 Worms in his body exploded and smoke began to appear from his seven apertures. He recited a spell beginning with the letter *Ohm* and summoned the local spirit and the mountain god of that region. The 2 of them knelt before him saying, "The local spirit and the mountain god have come to see you."

"Stick out your shanks," said Pilgrim, "and I'll greet each of you with five strokes of my rod just to relieve my feelings."

"Great Sage," they pleaded, "please be more lenient and allow your humble subjects to tell you something."

"What have you got to say?" said Pilgrim.

"The Great Sage's been in captivity for a long time," said the 2 deities, "and we'd no knowledge of when you're released. That's why we've not been here to receive you and beg you to pardon us."

"All right," said Pilgrim, "I'll not hit you. But let me ask you something. Where did that monstrous dragon in the Eagle Grief Stream come from and why did he devour my master's white horse?"

"We've never known the Great Sage to have a master," the 2 deities said, "for you've always been a first-rank primordial mortal who submits neither to Heaven nor to Earth. What do you mean by your master's horse?"

Pilgrim said, "Of course you didn't know about this. Because of my contemptuous behaviour toward Heaven, I'd to suffer for this five centuries. I was converted by the kindly persuasion of Nun Guanyin who had the true monk from the Tang court rescue me. As his disciple, I was to follow him to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God. We passed through this place and my master's white horse's lost."

"So, that's how it's!" said the 2 deities. "There's never been anything evil about this stream except that it's both broad, deep, and its water's so clear that you can see right to the bottom. Large fowls such as crows or eagles are hesitant to fly over it; for when they see their own reflections in the clear water, they're prone to mistake them for other birds of their own flock and throw themselves into the stream. Hence the name, the Steep Eagle Grief Stream. Some years ago on her way to look for a scripture pilgrim, Nun Guanyin rescued a dragon and sent him here. He's told to wait for the scripture pilgrim and was forbidden to do any evil or violence. Only when he's hungry is he permitted to come up to the banks to feed on birds or antelopes. How'd he be as ignorant as to offend the Great Sage!"

Pilgrim said, "At first, he wanted to have a contest of strength with me and managed only a few bouts. Afterwards he'd not come out even when I abused him. Only when I used the magic of overturning seas and rivers and stirred up the water did he appear again and then he still wanted to fight. He really had no idea how heavy my rod's! When finally he'd hold out no longer, he changed himself into a water snake and wriggled into the grass. I rushed up there to look for him but there's no trace of him."

"You may not know, Great Sage," said the local spirit, "that there're countless holes and crevices along these banks through which the stream's connected with its many tributaries. The dragon could've crawled into any one of these. But there's no need for the Great Sage to get angry trying to look for him. If you want to capture this creature, all you need do is to ask Guanshiyin to come here; then he'll certainly surrender."

When Pilgrim heard this, he called the mountain god and the local spirit to go with him to see Tripitaka to give an account of what had happened. "If you need to send for the Nun," said Tripitaka, "when'll you be able to return? How can this poor monk endure the cold and hunger?"

He had hardly finished speaking when the Golden-Headed Guardian called out from mid-air, "Great Sage, you needn't leave. Your humble subject will go fetch the Nun."

Pilgrim was very pleased, shouting, "Thanks for taking all that trouble! Go quickly!"

The Guardian mounted the clouds swiftly and headed straight for South Sea; Pilgrim asked the mountain god and the local spirit to protect his master and the Day Sentinel to find some vegetarian food while he himself went back to patrol the stream. We now tell you about the Golden-Headed Guardian who mounted the clouds and soon arrived at South Sea. Descending from the auspicious light, he went straight to the purple bamboo grove of the Potalaka Mountain where he asked the various deities in golden armour and Liberation to announce his arrival. The Nun said, "What've you come for?"

"The Tang Monk lost his horse at the Eagle Grief Stream of the Serpent Coil Mountain," said the guardian, "and the Great Sage Sun's placed in a terrible dilemma. He questioned the local deities who claimed that a dragon sent by the Nun to that stream had eaten it. The Great Sage therefore sent me to request the Nun to go and subdue that cursed dragon so that he might get back his horse."

Hearing this, the Nun said, "That creature's originally the son of Aorun of the Western Ocean. Because in his carelessness he set fire to the palace and destroyed the luminous pearls hanging there, his dad accused him of subversion, and he's condemned to die by the Heavenly Tribunal. It's I who personally sought pardon from the Jade Emperor for him so that he might serve as a means of transportation for the Tang Monk. I can't understand how he'd swallow the monk's horse instead. But if that's what happened, I'll have to get over there myself." The Nun left her lotus platform and went out of the divine cave. Mounting the auspicious luminosity with the Guardian, she crossed the South Sea. A testimonial poem says:

*God proclaimed the Tripitaka Supreme that a goddess declared throughout Chang'an: those great, wondrous truths could reach Heaven and Earth; wise, true words could save the spirits damned.*

*They caused Gold Cicada to cast again his shell.*

*They moved Xuanzang to mend his ways anew.*

*By blocking his path at Eagle Grief Stream, a dragon-prince in horse-form returns to the Real.*

The Nun and the Guardian soon arrived at the Serpent Coil Mountain. They stopped the hallowed clouds in mid-air and saw Pilgrim Sun down below, shouting abuses at the bank of the stream. The Nun asked the Guardian to fetch him. Lowering his clouds, the Guardian went past Tripitaka and headed straight for the edge of the stream saying to Pilgrim, "The Nun's arrived."

When Pilgrim heard this, he jumped quickly into the air and yelled at her: "You so-called Teacher of the Seven Gods and the Founder of the Faith of Mercy! Why did you've to use your tricks to harm me?"

"You impudent stableman, ignorant red-buttocks!" said the Nun. "I went to considerable effort to find a scripture pilgrim whom I carefully instructed to save your life. Instead of thanking me, you're finding fault with me!"

"You saved me all right!" said Pilgrim. "If you truly wanted to deliver me, you'd have allowed me to have a little fun with no strings attached; when you met me the other day above the ocean, you'd have chastened me with a few words, telling me to serve the Tang Monk with diligence, and that'd have been enough. Why did you've to give him a flower cap and have him deceive me into wearing it so that I'd suffer? Now the fillet's taken root on old monkey's head. And you even taught him this so-called *Tight-Fillet Spell* that he recites repeatedly causing endless pain in my head! You've not harmed me, indeed!"

The Nun laughed and said, "O, Monkey! You're neither attentive to admonition nor willing to seek the fruit of truth. If you're not restrained like this, you'll probably mock the authority of Heaven again without regard for good or ill. If you create troubles as you did before who'll be able to control you? It's only through this bit of adversity that you'll be willing to enter our gate of Yoga."

"All right," said Pilgrim, "I'll consider the matter my hard luck. But why did you take that condemned dragon and send him here so that he could become a spirit and swallow my master's horse? It's your fault if you allow an evildoer to perpetrate his villainies some more, you know!"

"I went personally to plead with the Jade Emperor," said the Nun, "to have the dragon stationed here so that he'd serve as a means of transportation for the scripture pilgrim. Those mortal horses from the Land of the East, do you think that they'd walk through ten thousand waters and a thousand hills? How'd they possibly hope to reach the Spirit Mountain, the land of God? Only a dragon-horse could make that journey!"

"But right now he's so terribly afraid of me," said Pilgrim, "that he refuses to come out of his hiding place. What can we do?"

The Nun said to the Guardian, "Go to the edge of the stream and say, 'Come out, Third Prince Jade Dragon of the Dragon King Aorun. The Nun from South Sea's here.' He'll come out then."

The Guardian went at once to the edge of the stream and called out twice. Churning the waters and leaping across the waves, the little dragon appeared and changed at once into the form of a man. He stepped on the clouds and rose up into the air; saluting the Nun, he said, "I thank the Nun again for saving my life. I've waited here a long time but heard no news of the scripture pilgrim."

Pointing to Pilgrim, the Nun said, "Isn't he the eldest disciple of the scripture pilgrim?" When he saw him, the little dragon said, "Nun, he's my adversary. I was hungry yesterday and ate his horse. We fought over that but he took advantage of his superior strength and defeated me; in fact, he so abused me that I dared not show myself again. But he's never mentioned a word about scripture seeking."

"You didn't bother to ask my name," said Pilgrim. "How did you expect me to tell you anything?"

The little dragon said, "Didn't I ask you, 'What kind of a monster are you and where do you come from?' But all you did was shout, 'Never mind where I come from; just return my horse!' Since when did you utter even half the word *Tang*?"

"That monkey's," said the Nun, "always relying on his own abilities! When's he ever given any credit to other people? When you set off this time, remember that there're others who'll join you. So when they ask you, by all means mention first the matter of scripture seeking; they'll submit to you without causing you further trouble."

Pilgrim received this word of counsel amiably. The Nun went up to the little dragon and plucked off the shining pearls hanging around his neck. She then dipped her willow branch into the sweet dew in her vase and sprinkled it all over his body; blowing a mouthful of magic breath on him, she cried, "Change!" The dragon at once changed into a horse with hair of exactly the same colour and quality as that of the horse he had swallowed. The Nun then told him, "You must overcome with utmost diligence all the cursed barriers. When your merit's achieved, you'll no longer be an ordinary dragon; you'll acquire the true fruit of a golden body." Holding the bit in his mouth, the little dragon humbly accepted the instruction. The Nun told Wukong to lead him to Tripitaka saying, "I'm returning across the ocean."

Pilgrim took hold of her and refused to let go, saying, "I'm not going on! I'm not going on! The road to the West is so treacherous! If I've to accompany this mortal monk, when'll I ever get there? If I've to endure all these miseries, I may well lose my life. What sort of merit do you think I'll achieve? I'm not going! I'm not going!"

"In years past, before you reached the way of humanity," said the Nun, "you're most eager to seek enlightenment. Now that you've been delivered from the chastisement of Heaven, how'd you become slothful again? The truth of Extinguishments in our teaching can never be realised without faith and perseverance. If on your journey you'd come across any danger that threatens your life, I give you permission to call on Heaven, and Heaven will respond; to call on Earth, and Earth will prove efficacious. In the event of extreme difficulty, I myself will come to rescue you. Come closer, and I'll endow you with one more means of power." Plucking three leaves from her willow branch, the Nun placed them at the back of Pilgrim's head, crying, "Change!" They changed at once into three hairs with lifesaving power. She said to him: "When you find yourself in a helpless and hopeless situation, you may use these according to your needs, and they will deliver you from your particular affliction."

After Pilgrim had heard all these kind words, he thanked the Nun of Great Mercy and Compassion. With scented wind and coloured mists swirling around her, the Nun returned to Potalaka. Lowering the direction of his cloud, Pilgrim tugged at the mane of the horse and led him to Tripitaka, saying, "Master, we've a horse!" Highly pleased by what he saw, Tripitaka said, "Disciple, how is it that the horse has grown a little fatter and stronger than before? Where did you find him?"

"Master, you're still dreaming!" said Pilgrim. "Just now the Golden-Headed Guardian managed to bring the Nun here, and she transformed the dragon of the stream into our white horse. Except for the missing harness, the colour and hair are all the same, and old monkey has pulled him here."

"Where is the Nun?" asked Tripitaka, greatly surprised. "Let me go and thank her."

"By this time," said Pilgrim, "the Nun has probably arrived at South Sea; there's no need to bother about that." Picking up a few pinches of earth with his fingers and scattering them like incense, Tripitaka saluted reverently toward the South. He then got up and prepared to leave again with Pilgrim.

Having dismissed the mountain god and the local spirit and given instructions to the Guardians and the Sentinels, Pilgrim asked his master to mount. Tripitaka said, "How can I ride a horse without harness? Let's find a boat to cross this stream, and then we can decide what to do."

"This master of mine is truly impractical!" said Pilgrim. "In the wilds of this mountain where will you find a boat? Since the horse has lived here for a long time, he must know the water's condition. Just ride him like a boat and we'll cross over." Tripitaka had no choice but to follow his suggestion and climbed onto the bare-backed horse; Pilgrim took up the luggage and they arrived at the edge of the stream. Then they saw an old angler punting downstream toward them in an old wooden raft. When Pilgrim caught sight of him, he waved his hands and called out: "Old angler, come here! Come here! We come from the Land of the East to seek scriptures. It's difficult for my master to cross, so please take us over." Hearing these words, the angler quickly punted the raft up to the bank. Asking his master to dismount, Pilgrim helped Tripitaka onto the raft before he embarked the horse and the luggage. That old fisher punted the raft away, and like an arrow in the wind, they crossed the steep Eagle Grief Stream swiftly and landed on the western shore. Tripitaka told Pilgrim to untie a bag and take out a few Tang pennies to give to the old angler. With a shove of his pole, the old angler pulled away, saying, "I don't want any money." He drifted downstream and soon disappeared from sight. Feeling very much obliged, Tripitaka kept folding his hands to express his gratitude. "Master," said Pilgrim, "you needn't be so solicitous. Don't you recognise him? He is the Water God of this stream. Since he didn't come to pay his respects to old monkey, he was about to get a beating. It's enough that he is now spared from that. Would he dare take any money!"

The Master only half-believed him when he climbed onto the bare-backed horse once again; following Pilgrim, he went up to the main road and set off again toward the West. It would be like this that they *through the vast Thusness<sup>2</sup> reach the other shore and climb with hearts unfeigned the Spirit Mount*. Master and disciple journeyed on, and soon the fiery sun sank westward as the sky gradually darkened. *See clouds hazy and aimless, a mountain moon dim and gloomy. The sky, all frosty, builds the cold; howling wind around cuts through you. 1 bird is lost midst the pale, wide sandbars as twilight glows where the distant hills are low. A thousand trees roar in sparse woods; 1 ape cries on a barren peak. No traveller is seen on this long road when boats from afar return for the night.* As Tripitaka, riding his horse, peered into the distance, he suddenly saw something like a hamlet beside the road. "Wukong," he said, "there's a house ahead of us. Let's ask for lodging there and travel again tomorrow."

Raising his head to take a look, Pilgrim said, "Master, it's no ordinary house."

"Why not?" said Tripitaka. "If it were an ordinary house," said Pilgrim, "there would be no flying fishes or reclining beasts decorating the ridge of its roof. That must be a temple or an abbey." While they were speaking, master and disciple arrived at the gate of the building. Dismounting, Tripitaka saw on top of the gate three large characters: Lishe Shrine. They walked inside where they were met by an old man with some beads hanging around his neck. He came forward with hands folded, saying, "Master, please take a seat." Tripitaka hastily returned his salutation and then went to the main hall to salute the holy images. The old man called a youth to serve tea, after which Tripitaka asked him, "Why this shrine is named Lishe?"

The old man said, "This region belongs to the Hamil Kingdom of the western barbarians. There is a village behind the shrine that was built from the piety of all its families. The 'Li' refers to the land owned by the whole village, and the 'She' is a god of the Soil. During the days of spring sowing, summer ploughing, autumn harvesting, and winter storing, each of the families would bring the three beasts,<sup>3</sup> flowers, and fruits to sacrifice at the shrine, so that they might be blessed with good luck in all four seasons, a rich harvest of the five grains, and prosperity in raising the six domestic creatures."<sup>4</sup> When Tripitaka heard these words, he nodded his head to show his approval, saying, "This is truly like the proverb: 'Even three miles from home there are customs entirely distinct.' The families in our region do not practice such good works." Then the old man asked, "Where is the honourable home of the master?"

"Your poor monk," said Tripitaka, "happens to have been sent by the royal decree from the Great Tang Nation in the East to go to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven. It was getting rather late when I passed your esteemed edifice. I therefore came to your holy shrine to ask for a night's lodging. I'll leave as soon as it gets light." The old man was delighted and kept saying, "Welcome! Welcome!" He called the youth again to prepare a meal that Tripitaka ate with gratitude.

As usual, Pilgrim was extremely observant. Noticing a rope for hanging laundry tied under the eaves, he walked over to it and pulled at it until it snapped in two. He then used the piece of rope to tie up the horse. "Where did you steal this horse?" asked the old man, laughing. "Old man," said Pilgrim angrily, "watch what you're saying! We're holy monks going to worship God. How could we steal horses?"

"If you didn't steal it," laughed the old man, "why is there no saddle or rein, so that you've to rip up my clothesline?"

"This rascal is always so impulsive," said Tripitaka apologetically. "If you wanted to tie up the horse, why didn't you ask the old gentleman properly for a rope? Why did you've to rip up his clothesline? Sir, please don't be angry! Our horse, to tell you the truth, is not a stolen one. When we approached the Eagle Grief Stream yesterday from the east, I'd a white horse complete with harness. Little did we anticipate that there was a condemned dragon in the stream who had become a spirit, and who swallowed my horse in one gulp, harness and all. Fortunately, my disciple has some talents, and he was able to bring the Nun Guanyin to the stream to subdue the dragon. She told him to assume the form of my original white horse, so that he could carry me to worship God in the Western Heaven. It has barely been one day since we crossed the stream and arrived at your holy shrine. We've not had time to look for a harness."

"Master, you needn't worry," said the old man. "An old man like me loves to tease but I'd no idea your esteemed disciple was so serious about everything! When I was young, I'd a little money, and I, too, loved to ride. But over the years I'd my share of misfortunes: deaths in the family and fires in the household have not left me much. Thus I'm reduced to being a caretaker here in the shrine, looking after the fires and incense, and dependent on the goodwill of the patrons in the village back there for a living. I still have in my possession a harness that I've always cherished, and that even in this poverty I'd not bear to sell. But since hearing your story, how even the Nun delivered the divine dragon and made him change into a horse to carry you, I feel that I must not withhold from giving either. I'll bring the harness tomorrow and present it to the master who, I hope, will be pleased to accept it." When Tripitaka heard this, he thanked him repeatedly. Before long, the youth brought in the evening meal, after which lamps were lit and the beds prepared. Everyone then retired.

Next morning, Pilgrim arose and said, "Master, that old caretaker promised last night to give us the harness. Ask him for it. Don't spare him." He had hardly finished speaking when the old man came in with a saddle, together with pads, reins, and the like. Not a single item needed for riding a horse was lacking. He set them down in the corridor, saying, "Master, I'm presenting you with this harness." When Tripitaka saw it, he accepted it with delight and asked Pilgrim to try the saddle on the horse. Going forward, Pilgrim took up the accoutrements and examined them piece by piece. They were indeed some magnificent articles for which a testimonial poem says:

*The carved saddle shines with studs of silver stars.  
The precious seat glows with bright threads of gold.  
The pads are stacks of fine-spun woollen quilts.  
The reins are three bands of purple cords of silk.  
The bridle's leather straps are shaped like flowers.  
The flaps have gold-etched forms of dancing beasts.  
The rings and bit are made of finest steel.  
Waterproof tassels dangle on both sides.*

Secretly pleased, Pilgrim put the saddle on the back of the horse, and it seemed to have been made to measure. Tripitaka saluted to thank the old man who hastily raised him up, saying, "It's nothing! What do you need to thank me for?" The old man did not ask them to stay any longer; instead, he urged Tripitaka to mount. The priest came out of the gate and climbed into the saddle while Pilgrim followed, hauling the luggage. The old man then took a whip out from his sleeve with a handle of rattan wrapped in strips of leather, and the strap knitted with cords made of tiger ligaments. He stood by the side of the road and presented it with hands uplifted, saying, "Holy Monk, I've a whip here that I may as well give you." Tripitaka accepted it on his horse, saying, "Thanks for your donation! Thanks for your donation!"

Even as he was saying this, the old man vanished. The priest turned around to look at the Lishe Shrine but it had become just a piece of level ground. From the sky came a voice saying, "Holy Monk, I'm sorry not to have given you a better reception! I'm the local spirit of Potalaka Mountain who was sent by the Nun to present you with the harness. You two must journey to the West with all diligence. Do not be slothful in any moment." Tripitaka was so startled that he fell off his horse and saluted toward the sky, saying, "Your disciple is of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, and he does not recognise the holy visage of the deity. Please forgive me. I beseech you to convey my gratitude to the Nun." Look at him! All he could do was to respect toward the sky without bothering to count how many times! By the side of the road the Great Sage Sun reeled with laughter, the Handsome Monkey King broke up with hilarity. He came up and tugged at his master, saying, "Master, get up! He is long gone! He can't hear you, nor can he see your respecting. Why keep up this adoration?"

"Disciple," said the priest, "when I respected like that, all you'd do was to stand snickering by the side of the road with not even a salute. Why?"

"You'd not know, would you?" said Pilgrim. "For playing a game of hide-and-seek like that with us, he really deserves a beating! But for the sake of the Nun, I'll spare him and that's something already! You think he dares accept a salute from old monkey? Old monkey's been a hero since his youth and he doesn't know how to salute people! Even when I saw the Jade Emperor and Laozi, I just gave them my greeting, that's all!"

"Blasphemy!" said Tripitaka. "Stop this idle talk! Let's get going without further delay." So the priest got up and prepared to set off again toward the West. After leaving that place, they had a peaceful journey for two months, for all they met were barbarians, Muslims, tigers, wolves, and leopards. Time went by swiftly, and it was again early spring. You'd see jade green gilding the mountain forest, and green sprouts of grass appearing. The plum blossoms were all fallen and the willow-leaves gently budding. As master and disciple were admiring this scenery of spring, they saw the sun sinking westward again. Reining the horse, Tripitaka peered into the distance and saw at the fold of the hill the shadow of buildings and the dark silhouette of towers. "Wukong," said Tripitaka, "look at the buildings over there. What sort of a place's that?"

Stretching his neck to look, Pilgrim said, "It's to be either a temple or a monastery. Let's move along and ask for lodging over there." Tripitaka was glad to follow this suggestion and urged his dragon-horse forward.



**At Guanyin Hall the monks plot for the treasure; At Black Wind Mountain a monster steals the cassock**

The disciple and master who urged the horse forward and arrived at the front gate of the building. They saw that it was indeed a monastery with *tiers of towers, turrets, and rows of quiet chambers. Above the temple gate hung the august panoply of coloured nimbus; before the Hall of 5 Blessings whirled a thousand strands of bright red mists. 2 rows of pines and bamboos; 1 grove of juniper and cypress; 2 rows of pines and bamboos revealed their fair virtue unspoiled by time; 1 grove of juniper and cypress displayed its chaste beauty in comely hues. They saw also the tall bell tower, the pagoda rugged, monks in silent meditation and birds on trees gently cooing. A dustless seclusion was the real seclusion for the quiescence of Dao was truly quiescent.* The poem says:

*This temple, like Jetavana, hides in a jade-green grove. Its beauty surpasses even the Şađ-varṣa.<sup>1</sup>  
Pure land among mankind is rare indeed: this world's famed mountains are mostly held by monks.*

The priest dismounted, and Pilgrim laid down his load. They were about to walk through the gate when a monk came out. He looks like *he wore a hat pinned to the left and a robe most spotlessly pure. 2 brass rings hung from his ears; a silk sash was wrapped round his waist. His straw sandals moved sedately; hands carried a wooden fish. His mouth recited constantly the Wisdom he sought most humbly.* When Tripitaka saw him, he stood waiting by the gate and saluted with his palms pressed together in front of him. The monk returned the greeting at once and said laughing, “I’m sorry but I don’t know you!” He then asked, “Where do you come from? Please come in for some tea.”

“Your disciple,” said Tripitaka, “has been sent by royal decree from the Land of the East to go to seek scriptures from God in the Temple of Thunderclap. It was getting late when we arrived here, and we’d like to ask for a night’s lodging in your fair temple.”

“Please take a seat inside,” said the monk. Only then did Tripitaka call Pilgrim to lead the horse inside. When the monk caught sight of Pilgrim’s face, he became somewhat afraid and asked, “What’s that thing leading the horse?”

“Speak softly!” said Tripitaka. “He’s easily provoked! If he hears you referring to him as a thing, he’ll get mad. He happens to be my disciple.” With a shiver, the monk bit his finger and said, “Such a hideous creature, and you made him your disciple!” Tripitaka said, “You can’t tell by mere appearance. He may be ugly but he is very useful.”

That monk had little choice but to accompany Tripitaka and Pilgrim as they entered the temple gate. Inside, above the main hall’s entrance, the words “Guanyin Chan Hall” were written in large letters. Highly pleased, Tripitaka said, “This disciple has repeatedly benefited from the holy grace of the Nun, though he has had no opportunity to thank her. Now that we’re at this Chan hall, it is as if we’re meeting the Nun personally, and it is most proper that I’d offer my thanks.” When the monk heard this, he told one of the attendants to open wide the door of the hall and invited Tripitaka to worship. Pilgrim tied up the horse, dropped his luggage, and went with Tripitaka up the hall. Stretching his back and then flattening himself on the ground, Tripitaka respected to the golden image as the monk went to beat the drum, and Pilgrim began to strike the bell. Saluting himself before the seat of the deity, Tripitaka poured out his heart in prayer. When he finished, the monk stopped the drum but Pilgrim continued to strike the bell without ceasing. Now rapidly, now slowly, he persisted for a long time. The attendant said, “The service is over. Why are you still striking the bell?” Only then did Pilgrim throw away the hammer and say, laughing, “You’d not know this! I’m just living by the proverb: ‘If you’re a monk for a day, strike then the bell for a day!’”<sup>2</sup>

By then, the monks young and old of the monastery and the elders of upper and lower chambers were all aroused by the unruly sound of the bell. They rushed out together crying, “Who is the maniac fooling with the bell?” Pilgrim leaped out of the hall and shouted, “Your Grandpa Sun sounded it to amuse himself!” The moment the monks saw him, they were so frightened that they tumbled and rolled on the ground. Crawling around, they said, “Dad Thunder!”

“He’s only my great-grandson!” said Pilgrim. “Get up, get up! Don’t be afraid. We’re noble priests who have come from the Great Tang Nation in the east.”

The various monks then saluted courteously to him, and when they saw Tripitaka, they were even more reassured. 1 of the monks who was the abbot of the monastery said, “Let the holy dads come to the living room in the back so that we may offer them some tea.”

Untying the reins and leading the horse, they picked up the luggage and went past the main hall to the back of the monastery where they sat down in orderly rows. After serving tea, the abbot prepared a vegetarian meal, although it was still rather early for dinner. Tripitaka had not finished thanking him when an old monk emerged from the rear, supported by 2 boys. Look how he was attired: *wore on his head a Vairocana hat topped by a precious, shining cat’s-eye stone; on his body a brocaded woollen frock, piped brilliantly in gold and kingfisher feathers. A pair of monk shoes on which 8 Treasures were set and a priestly staff encased with starry gems. His face full of wrinkles, he looked like the Old Witch of Li Mountain; eyes were dim-sighted though he seemed a Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean. Wind stabbed his mouth for his teeth had fallen and palsy had made crooked his aged back.* The various monks made the announcement: “The Patriarch’s here.”

Tripitaka saluted to receive him saying, “Old Abbot, your disciple *salutes* you.”

The old monk returned the gesture and they were both seated. “Just now I heard the little ones announcing,” said the old monk, “that venerable dads from the Tang court have arrived from the east. I came out specifically to meet you.”

“Knowing no better,” said Tripitaka, “we intruded into your esteemed temple. Please pardon us!”

“Please, please!” said the old monk. “May I ask the holy dad what the distance is between here and the Land of the East?”

“Since leaving the outskirts of Chang’an,” said Tripitaka, “I travelled for some five thousand miles before passing the Mountain of Two Frontiers where I picked up a little disciple. Moving on, we passed through the Hamil Kingdom of the western barbarians and in two months we’d travelled another five or six thousand miles. Only then did we arrive at your noble region.”

“Well, you’ve covered the distance of ten thousand miles,” said the old monk. “This disciple truly has spent his life in vain, for he has not even left the door of the temple. I’ve, as the saying goes, ‘sat in the well to look at the sky.’ A veritable piece of dead wood!”

Then Tripitaka asked, “What is the honourable age of the Old Abbot?”

“Foolishly I’ve reached my two hundred and seventieth year,” said the old monk.

When Pilgrim heard this, he said, “You’re only my descendant of the ten-thousandth generation!”

“Careful!” said Tripitaka, looking at him sternly. “Don’t offend people with your brashness!”

“And you, Elder,” asked the old monk, “How old are you?”

“I daren’t tell,” said Pilgrim. That old monk thought it was just a foolish remark; he paid no further attention, nor did he ask again. Instead, he called for tea to be served, and a young cleric brought out a tray made of milk-white jade on which there were three cloisonné cups with gold edges. Another youth brought out a white copper pot and poured three cups of scented tea, truly more colourful than camellia buds and more fragrant than cassia flowers. When Tripitaka saw these, he could not cease making compliments, saying, “What marvellous things! What marvellous things! A lovely drink, indeed, and lovely utensils!”

“Most disgraceful stuff!” said the old monk. “The Holy Dad resides in the heavenly court of a great nation, and he has witnessed all kinds of rare treasures. Things like these are not worthy of your praise. Since you’ve come from a noble state, do you’ve any precious thing you can show me?”

“It’s pathetic!” said Tripitaka. “We’ve no precious thing in the Land of the East; and even if we’d, I’d not bring it with me because of the distance.”

From the side, Pilgrim said, “Master, I saw a cassock the other day in our bag. Isn’t that a treasure? Why not take it out and show it to him?” When the other monks heard him mentioning a cassock, they all began to snicker. “What are you laughing at?” asked Pilgrim. The abbot said, “To say that a cassock is a treasure, as you just did, is certainly laughable. If you want to talk about cassocks, priests like us would possess more than twenty or thirty such garments. Take the case of our Patriarch who has been a monk here for some two hundred and fifty years. He has over seven hundred of them!” He then made the suggestion: “Why not take them out for these people to see?” That old monk certainly thought it was his show this time! He asked the attendants to open up the storage room and the dhūtas to bring out the chests. They brought out twelve of them and set them down in the courtyard. The padlocks were unlocked; clothes racks were set up on both sides, and ropes were strung all around. One by one, the cassocks were shaken loose and hung up for Tripitaka to see. It was truly a roomful of embroidery, four walls of exquisite silk!

Glancing at them one by one, Pilgrim saw that they were all pieces of fine silk intricately woven and delicately embroidered, splashed with gold. He laughed and said, “Fine! Fine! Fine! Now pack them up! Let’s take ours out for you to look at.” Pulling Pilgrim aside, Tripitaka said softly, “Disciple, don’t start a contest of wealth with other people. You and I are strangers away from home, and this may be a mistake!”

“Just a look at the cassock,” said Pilgrim, “how can that be a mistake?”

“You’ve not considered this,” said Tripitaka. “As the ancients declared, ‘The rare object of art should not be exposed to the covetous and deceitful person.’ For once he sees it, he will be tempted; and once he is tempted, he will plot and scheme. If you’re timid, you may end up yielding to his every demand; otherwise, injury and loss of life may result, and that’s no small matter.”

“Relax! Relax!” said Pilgrim. “Old monkey will assume all responsibility!” *Look at him! He permitted no further discussion!*

Darting away, he untied the bag and brilliant rays at once came flashing through the two layers of oil-paper in which the garment was wrapped. He discarded the paper and took out the cassock. As he shook it loose, a crimson light flooded the room and glorious air filled the courtyard. When the various monks saw it, none could suppress the admiration in his heart and the praise on his lips. It was truly a magnificent cassock! It has hanging on it *sparkling pearls – marvellous in every way – and God’s treasures in each aspect rare. Up and down spreads grapevine<sup>3</sup> weave on gorgeous silk; on every side are hems of fine brocade. Put it on, and goblins will then be slain. Step in it, and demons will flee to Hell. It’s made by those hands of gods incarnate; he who is not a true monk dares not wear it.* When the old monk saw a treasure of such quality, he was indeed moved to villainy. Walking forward, he knelt down before Tripitaka and tears began to fall from his eyes. “This disciple’s truly no luck,” he said.

“Old Abbot,” said Tripitaka, raising him up, “what do you mean?”

“It was already getting late,” he said, “when the venerable dad spread this treasure out. But my eyes are dim and I can’t see clearly. Isn’t this my misfortune?”

“Bring out the lamps,” said Tripitaka, “and you can take a better look.” The old monk said, “The treasure of the dad is already dazzling; if we light the lamps, it will become much too bright for my eyes, and I’ll never be able to see it properly.”

“How would you like to see it?” asked Pilgrim. “If the venerable dad is inclined to be gracious,” replied the old monk, “please permit me to take it back to my room where I can spend the night looking at it carefully. Tomorrow I’ll return it to you before you continue your journey to the west. How would that be?” Startled, Tripitaka began to complain to Pilgrim, saying, “It’s all your doing! It’s all your doing!”

“What are you afraid of?” said Pilgrim, laughing. “Let me wrap it up and he can take it away. If there’s any mishap, old monkey will take care of it.” Tripitaka could not stop him; he handed the cassock over to the monk, saying, “You may look at it but you must give it back tomorrow morning, just as it is. Don’t spoil or damage it in any way!”

The old monk was very pleased. After telling the young cleric to take the cassock inside, he gave instructions for the various monks to sweep out the Chan hall in front. 2 rattan beds were sent for and the bedding was prepared so that the 2 travellers could rest. He gave further instructions for sending them off with breakfast in the morning after which everyone left. Master and disciple closed up the hall and slept. The old monk had got hold of the cassock by fraud. He took it beneath the lamps in the back room and sat in front of it, bawling. The chief priest of the monastery was so startled that he dared not retire first. The young cleric, not knowing the reason for the weeping, went to report to the other monks saying, “The aged dad’s been crying and it’s now the second watch and he’s still not stopped.”

2 grand disciples who were his favourites, went forward to ask him, “Grand master, why are you crying?”

“I’m crying over my ill luck,” replied the old monk, “for I can’t look at the treasure of the Tang Monk.” One of the little monks said, “The aged dad is becoming a little senile! The cassock is placed right before you. All you’ve to do is to untie the package and look at it. Why do you’ve to cry?”

“But I can’t look at it for long,” said the old monk. “I’m two hundred and seventy years old, and yet I’ve bargained in vain for those several hundred cassocks. What must I do to acquire that one cassock of his? How can I become the Tang Monk himself?”

“The grand master is erring,” said the little monk. “The Tang Monk is a mendicant who had to leave his home and country. You’re enjoying the benefits of old age here, and that should be sufficient. Why do you want to be a mendicant like him?” The old monk said, “Though I’m relaxing at home and enjoying my declining years, I’ve no cassock like his to put on. If I can put it on for just one day, I’ll die with my eyes shut, for then I’ll not have been a monk in vain in this World of Light.”

“What nonsense!” said another monk. “If you want to put it on, what’s so difficult about that? Tomorrow we’ll ask them to stay for one more day, and you can wear it the whole day; if that’s not enough, we’ll detain them for ten days so that you can wear the cassock all that time. That will be the end of the matter. Why do you’ve to cry like this?”

“Even if they were to be detained for a whole year,” said the old monk, “I’d only be able to wear it for one year. That’s not long-lasting! The moment they want to leave, we’ll have to return it. How can we make it last?”

As they were speaking, one of the little monks whose name was Great Wisdom, spoke up: “Aged Dad, if you want it to last, that’s easy too!” When the old monk heard that, he brightened up. “My son,” he said, “what profound thoughts do you’ve?” Great Wisdom said, “The Tang Monk and his disciple are travellers and are subjected to a lot of stress and strain. So they are fast asleep now. I suppose a few of us who are strong could take up knives and spears, break open the Chan hall, and kill them. We’d bury them in the backyard, and only those of us within the family would know about it. We’d

also take over the white horse and the luggage but the cassock could be kept as an heirloom. Now isn't this a plan made to last through posterity?" When the old monk heard this, he was filled with delight. Wiping away his tears, he said, "Good! Good! Good! This plan is absolutely marvellous!" He asked at once for knives and spears.

There was in their midst another little monk whose name was Big Plan who was the younger classmate of Great Wisdom. Coming forward, he said, "That plan is no good! If you want to kill them, you must first assess the situation. It's easy to take care of the one with the white face but the hairy face presents more difficulty. If for some reason you're unable to slay him, you might bring disaster upon yourselves. I've a plan that does not call for knives or spears. How do you feel about this?"

"My son," said the old monk, "what sort of plan do you've?"

"In the opinion of your little grandson," said Big Plan, "we can call up all the resident heads, both senior and junior, in the eastern wing of this monastery, asking each person and his group to bring a bundle of dried firewood. We'll sacrifice the three rooms of the Chan hall and set fire to them; the people inside will be barred from all exits. Even the horse will be burned with them! If the families who live in front of the temple or behind it should see the fire, we can say that they caused it by their carelessness and burned down our Chan hall. Those two monks will surely be burned to death but no one will know any better. After that, won't we've the cassock as our heirloom?"

When the monks heard this, they were all delighted. "Better! Better! Better! This plan is even more marvellous! More marvellous!" they all said.

They sent for the resident heads at once to bring firewood. Alas, this single plan will have the result of a *venerable old monk ending his life and the Guanyin Chan Hall reduced to dust*. That monastery had over seventy suites and some two hundred monks resided there. Hordes of them went to fetch firewood that they stacked around the Chan hall until it was completely surrounded. They then made plans to light the fire. Tripitaka and his disciple had already gone to rest. That Pilgrim however, was a spiritual monkey; though he lay down, he was only exercising his breath to preserve his spirit with his eyes half-closed. Suddenly he heard people running around outside and the crackling of firewood in the wind. "This is a time for quietness," he said to himself, his suspicion fully aroused, "so why do I hear people walking about? Could they be thieves plotting against us?" Whirling around, he leaped up, and would have opened the door to look outside, had he not been afraid of waking his master.

*Look at him display his abilities!*

With 1 shake of his body he changed into a bee. Truly he had a *sweet mouth and vicious tail; a small waist and light body. He cut through flowers and willow like a dart; sought like a meteor the scented pollen. His light, tiny body could bear much weight. His thin wings buzzing could ride the wind. Descending from rafters and beams, he crawled out to get a clear view*. He then saw that the various monks were hauling hay and carrying firewood; surrounding the Chan hall, they were about to light the fire. "What my master said has really come true!" said Pilgrim, smiling to himself. "Because they wanted to take our lives and rob us of our cassock, they're moved to such treachery. I suppose I'd use my rod to attack them but I'm afraid they'd be unable to withstand it. A little beating and they'd all be dead! Then Master would blame me for acting violently again. O, let it be! I'll lead the sheep astray conveniently and meet plot with plot so that they'll be able to live here no more." *Dear Pilgrim!*

With a single somersault, he leaped straight up to the South Heaven Gate. He so startled the divine warriors Pang, Liu, Gou, and Bi that they saluted, and so alarmed Ma, Zhao, Wen, and Guan that they bent low. "Good Heavens!" they cried. "That character who disrupted Heaven's here again!"

"No need to stand on ceremony, all of you!" said Pilgrim, waving his hand. "And don't be alarmed! I came to find Virūpākṣa, the Broad-Eyed Deity-King."

Before he had finished speaking, the Deity-King arrived and greeted Pilgrim, saying, "It's been a long time! I heard some time ago that the Nun Guanyin asked the Jade Emperor for the services of the Four Sentinels, the Six Gods of Light, Darkness, and the Guardians to protect the Tang Monk as he goes in quest of scriptures in the Western Heaven. She also said that you'd become his disciple. How do you've the leisure to be here today?"

"Don't mention leisure!" said Pilgrim. "The Tang Monk met some wicked people on his journey who are about to have him burned up. It's an extreme emergency, and that's why I've come to borrow your Fire-Repelling Cover to save him. Bring it to me quickly; I'll return it the moment I'm finished with it."

"You're wrong," said the Deity-King. "If wicked people are starting a fire, you'd go find water to save him. Why do you want the Fire-Repelling Cover?" Pilgrim said, "You've no idea what's behind this. If I find water to save him, the fire won't burn, and that will benefit our enemies instead. I want this cover so that only the Tang Monk will be protected from harm. I don't care about the rest! Let them burn! Quickly! Quickly! A little delay, and it may be too late! You'll botch up my affairs down below!"

"This monkey is still plotting with an evil mind," said the Deity-King, laughing. "After looking out for himself, he is not worried about other people."

"Hurry!" said Pilgrim. "Stop wagging your tongue, or you'll upset my great enterprise!"

The Deity-King dared not refuse and gave Pilgrim the cover. Pilgrim took it and descended through the clouds to the roof of the Chan hall where he covered up the Tang Monk, the white horse, and the luggage. He himself then went to sit on the roof of the back room occupied by the old monk in order to guard the cassock. As he saw the people lighting the fire, he pressed his fingers together to make a magic sign and recited a spell. Facing the ground to the southwest, he took a deep breath and then blew it out. At once a strong wind arose and whipped the fire into a mighty blaze. *What a fire! What a fire! See rolling black smoke; vaulting red flames. With rolling black smoke all the stars vanish from the vast sky; with vaulting red flames the earth's lit up, made crimson for 1000 miles. At the beginning, what gleaming snakes of gold! Soon thereafter, what imposing bloody horses! The 3 Southern Forces display their might. The Great God of Fire reveals his power. When dried wood burns in such fire intense, why speak of Suiren<sup>4</sup> drilling fire from wood? When coloured flames shoot out of hot-oiled doors, they match even the opened oven of Laozi. This is how fire rages ruthlessly though no worse than such intended fraud as not suppressing misdeeds and abetting violence. The wind sweeps the fire and flames fly up for some 8000 feet; the fire's helped by the wind so ashes burst beyond the 9-fold Heaven. Ping-ping, pang-pang, they sound like those firecrackers at year's end. Popo, la-la, they're like the roar of cannons in the camps. It burns till a god's image cannot flee from the scene and the Temple Guardians have no place to hide. It's like the Red Cliff Campaign in the night, <sup>5</sup>surpassing the fire at Epang Palace. <sup>6</sup>As the saying goes, "One little spark of fire can burn ten thousand acres."*

In a moment, the strong wind and the raging fire made the entire Guanyin Hall glowing red. Look at all those monks! They began to bring out the chests and carry out the drawers, to grab for tables and snatch up pots. A loud wailing filled the whole courtyard. Pilgrim Sun however, stood guard at the back while the Fire-Repelling Cover securely screened off the Chan hall at the front. The rest of the place was completely lit up; truly the sky was illuminated by brilliant red flames, and bright gold light shone through the walls. No one knew however, that when the fire had begun, it had caught the attention of a mountain monster. For about 20 miles due south of this Guanyin Hall there was a Black Wind Mountain where there was also a Black Wind Cave. A monster in the cave who happened to turn over in his sleep, noticed that his windows were lit up. He thought that dawn had broken but when he arose and took another look, he saw instead the brilliant glow of fire burning in the north. Astonished, the monster said, "Good Heavens! There must be a fire in the Guanyin Hall. Those monks are so careless! Let me see if I can help them a little!" *Dear monster!*

He rose with his cloud and went at once to the place of fire and smoke where he discovered that the halls front and back were entirely empty while the fire in the corridors on both sides was raging. With great strides he ran inside and was about to call for water when he saw that there was no fire in the back room. Someone however, was sitting on the roof whipping up the wind. He began to perceive what was happening and ran quickly inside to look around. In the living room of the old monk, he saw on the table colourful radiance emitted by a package wrapped in a blue blanket. He untied it and discovered that it was a cassock of silk brocade, a rare Religious treasure. Thus it is how wealth moves the mind of man! He neither attempted to put out the fire nor called for water. Snatching up the cassock, he committed robbery by taking advantage of the confusion and at once turned his cloud back toward the mountain cave. The fire raged on until the time of the fifth watch before burning itself out. Look at those monks: weeping and wailing, they went with empty hands and naked bodies to rummage about in the ashes, trying desperately to salvage a scrap or two of metal or valuables. Some attempted to erect a temporary shelter along the walls while others amid the rubble tried to build a makeshift oven so that rice could be cooked. They were all howling and complaining. Now Pilgrim taking the Fire-Repelling Cover, sent it up to the South Heaven Gate with 1 somersault. He handed it back to the Broad-Eyed Deity-King saying, "Thanks so much for lending it to me!"

The Deity-King took it back and said, "The Great Sage is very honest. I was a little worried that if you didn't return my treasure, I'd have a hard time finding you. I'm glad you brought it right back."

"Do you think that old monkey is the sort of person who steals openly?" asked Pilgrim. "As the saying goes, 'Return what you borrow, and again you may borrow!'"

"I've not seen you for a long time," said the Deity-King, "and I'd like to invite you to spend some time at my palace. How about it?" Pilgrim said, "Old monkey can't do what he did before, 'squatting on a rotted bench and dispensing lofty discourse.' Now that I've to protect the Tang Monk, I've not a moment's leisure. Give me a rain check!" He took leave of the Deity-King quickly and dropped down from the clouds. As the sun arose, he arrived at the Chan hall where with one shake of his body he changed again into a bee. When he flew inside and resumed his original form, he saw that his master was still sleeping soundly.

"Master," cried Pilgrim, "it's dawn. Get up." Only then did Tripitaka awake; he turned around, saying, "Yes, indeed!" Putting on his clothes, he opened the door and went out. As he raised his head, he saw crumbling walls and seared partitions; the towers, the terraces, and the buildings had all disappeared. "Ah!" he cried, greatly shaken. "How is it that the buildings are all gone? Why are there only scorched walls?"

"You're still dreaming!" said Pilgrim. "They had a fire here last night."

"Why didn't I know about it?" asked Tripitaka. "It's old monkey who safeguarded the Chan hall," replied Pilgrim. "When I saw that Master was sound asleep, I didn't disturb you."

"If you had the ability to safeguard the Chan hall," said Tripitaka, "why didn't you put out the fire in the other buildings?"

"So that you may learn the truth," said Pilgrim, laughing, "Just as you predicted it yesterday. They fell in love with our cassock and made plans to have us burned to death. If old monkey had been less alert, we'd have been reduced to bone and ashes by now!" When Tripitaka heard these words, he was alarmed and asked, "Was it they who set the fire?"

"Who else?" said Pilgrim.

"Could it be," asked Tripitaka, "that they mistreated you, and you did this?"

Pilgrim replied, "Is old monkey the sort of wretch that would indulge in such sordid business? It really was they who set the fire. When I saw how malicious they were, I admit I didn't help them put the fire out. I did however, manage to provide them with a little wind!"

"My God! My God!" said Tripitaka. "When a fire starts, you'd get water. How could you provide wind instead?"

"You must have heard," said Pilgrim, "what the ancients said: 'If a man has no desire to harm a tiger, a tiger has no intention of hurting a man.' If they hadn't played with fire, would I've played with wind?"

"Where's the cassock?" asked Tripitaka. "Has it been burned?"

"Not at all!" replied Pilgrim. "It hasn't been burned, for the fire didn't reach the living quarters of the old monk where the cassock was placed."

"I don't care!" exclaimed Tripitaka, his resentment rising. "If there's the slightest damage, I'm going to recite that little something and you'll be dead!"

"Master!" cried Pilgrim with alarm, "don't start your recitation! I'll find the cassock and return it to you, and that'll be the end of the matter. Let me go fetch it so that we can start on our journey." Tripitaka led the horse while Pilgrim took up the load of luggage. They left the Chan hall and went to the room at the rear.

We now tell you about the monks who were still grieving when they suddenly saw master and disciple approaching with the horse and the luggage. Scared out of their wits, they all said, "The wronged souls have come to seek vengeance!"

"What wronged souls are seeking vengeance?" shouted Pilgrim. "Give back my cassock quickly!" All the monks fell to their knees at once, saying as they respected, "Holy Dads! Just as a wrong implies an enemy, so a debt has its proper creditor! If you seek vengeance, please understand that we'd nothing to do with this. It was the old monk who plotted with Big Plan against you. Don't make us pay for your lives!"

"You damnable beasts!" cried Pilgrim angrily. "Who wants you to pay with your lives? Just give me back the cassock and we'll be going." Two of the monks who were less timid said to him, "Dad, you're supposed to be burned to death in the Chan hall, and yet now you come to demand the cassock. Are you indeed a man, or are you a ghost?"

"This bunch of accursed creatures!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "Where was the fire? Go to the front and look at the Chan hall. Then you can come back and talk." The monks got up and went to the front to look; not even half an inch of the door, the window, or the screen outside the Chan hall was scorched. One and all were awestruck and became convinced that Tripitaka was a divine monk, and Pilgrim a celestial guardian. They all went forward to respect to them, saying, "We've eyes but no pupils, and therefore we didn't recognise True Men descending to Earth. Your cassock is at the residence of the old Patriarch at the back." Tripitaka was deeply saddened by the rows of crumbling walls and damaged partitions they went past before arriving at the Patriarch's chambers that were indeed untouched by fire. The monks dashed in, crying, "Aged Dad, the Tang Monk must be a god. He hasn't been burned to death, though we've hurt ourselves. Let's take the cassock quickly and give it back to him."

But the fact of the matter is that the old monk could not find the cassock. In addition, most of the buildings in his monastery had been ruined, and he was, of course, terribly distressed. When he heard the monks calling, how could he have the courage to reply? Feeling utterly helpless and incapable of solving his dilemma, he bent forward, took several great strides, and rammed his head into the wall. How pitiful! The impact made *the brain burst, the blood flow, and his soul disperse; his head stained the sand as his breathing stopped*. A poem as a testimony says:

*So lamentable is this blind old monk!*

*In vain he lives among men to such old age.*

*He wants the cassock forever to keep, not knowing how uncommon God's gift's.*

*If you think what endures can come with ease, yours will be sure failure and certain grief.  
Big Plan, Great Wisdom, of what use are they?  
To gain by others' loss – what empty dreams!*

Shocked to tears, the monks cried, “The Patriarch’s killed himself. And we can’t find the cassock. What’ll we do?”

“It must’ve been you who stole it and hid it,” said Pilgrim. “Come out, all of you! Give me a complete list of your names and let me check you off the roll one by one.” The head residents of all the upper and lower chambers made a thorough accounting of all the monks, the *dhūtas*, the young novices, the Daoists in 2 scrolls, and presented Pilgrim with some 230 names. Asking his master to take a seat in the middle, Pilgrim went through the roll and examined the monks one by one. Every person had to loosen his clothes to be searched thoroughly but there was no cassock. They then went to hunt through the trunks and chests that had been salvaged from the fire but again there was not the slightest trace of the garment. In dismay, Tripitaka became more and more embittered toward Pilgrim until he began reciting the spell as he sat there. Falling at once to the ground, Pilgrim gripped his head with his hands, hardly able to bear the pain. “Stop the recitation! Stop the recitation!” he cried. “I’ll find the cassock.” Terrified by what they saw, the various monks went forward and knelt down to plead with Tripitaka who only then stopped his recitation. Pilgrim leaped straight up and whipped out his rod from his ear. He would have struck at the monks, had not Tripitaka shouted for him to halt, crying, “Monkey! Aren’t you afraid of your headache? Do you still want to behave badly? Don’t move, and don’t hurt people! Let me question them further.” The monks respected and begged Tripitaka, saying, “Dad, please spare us. Truly we didn’t see your cassock. It was entirely the fault of that old devil! After he got your cassock last night, he started crying until very late; he didn’t even bother to look at it, for all he had on his mind was how he might keep it permanently as an heirloom. That was why he made plans to have you burned to death but after the fire started, a violent wind arose also. Every one of us was only concerned with putting out the fire and trying to save something. We’ve no idea where the cassock has gone.”

Angrily, Pilgrim walked into the Patriarch’s room, pulled out the corpse of the old man rammed to death, and stripped him naked. The body was examined carefully but the treasure was nowhere to be seen. Even if they had dug up three feet of the ground in that room, there would have been not a trace of it. Pilgrim thought silently for a while and then asked, “Is there any monster around here who has become a spirit?”

“If dad hadn’t asked,” said the abbot, “he would have never known about this. Southeast of us there is a Black Wind Mountain, in which there is a Black Wind Cave. In the cave is a Black Great King with whom this deceased old fellow of ours used to discuss the Dao frequently. He is the only monster spirit around here.”

“How far is the mountain from here?” asked Pilgrim. “Only twenty miles,” said the abbot. “The peak that you can see right now is where it is.” Pilgrim laughed and said, “Relax, Master! No need for further discussion; it must have been stolen by the black monster.”

“That place is about twenty miles away,” said Tripitaka. “How can you be so sure that it was he?”

“You didn’t see last night’s fire,” said Pilgrim, “when its light illuminated great distances, and its brightness penetrated the Threefold Heaven. Not just for twenty miles but for two hundred miles around it could be seen. I’ve no doubt that he saw the brilliant glow of the fire and used that opportunity to come here secretly. When he saw that our cassock was a treasure, he grabbed it in the confusion and left. Let old monkey go find him.”

“Who will care for me while you’re gone?” asked Tripitaka.

“You can relax,” said Pilgrim. “You’ve in secret the protection of the gods; and I’ll make sure that the monks wait on you in the open.” He then called the monks over, saying, “A few of you can go and bury that old devil while the others can wait on my master and watch our white horse. The monks at once agreed. Pilgrim said again, “Give me no casual reply now only to grow slack in your service after I’m gone. Those who wait on my master must be cheerful and pleasant; those who look after the white horse must take care that water and hay are fed in proper proportions. If there’s the slightest mistake, you can count on meeting this rod. Now watch!”

He whipped out his rod and aimed it at the seared bricked wall: with one stroke, not only did he pulverize the wall but the impact was so great that it caused seven or eight more walls to collapse. When the various monks saw this, they were all paralysed with fear. They knelt to respect with tears flowing from their eyes and said, “Dad, please be assured that we’ll be most diligent in caring for the Holy Dad after you’re gone. We’d not dream of slacking in any way.” *Dear Pilgrim!* He swiftly mounted the cloud somersault and went straight to the Black Wind Mountain to look for the cassock. Thus it was that *truth-seeking Gold Cicada left Chang’an. <sup>1</sup>With gifts he went westward, passing blue-green hills. There were wolves and tigers as he walked along though merchants or scholars were rarely seen. 1 foolish monk’s envy abroad he met; his refuge solely was the Great Sage’s might. The fire grew; the wind came and wrecked the Chan hall. A Black Bear at night stole the embroidered robe.*

## 017

### Pilgrim Sun greatly disturbs the Black Wind Mountain; Guanshiyin brings to submission the bear monster

We now tell you that when Pilgrim Sun somersaulted into the air, he so terrified the monks, the *dhūtas*, the young novices, and the attendants at the Guanyin Hall that every person saluted to the sky saying, “O, Dad! So you’re actually an incarnate deity who knows how to ride the fog and sail with the clouds! No wonder fire can’t harm you! That ignorant old carcass of ours – how despicable he’s! He used all his intelligence only to bring disaster on his own head.”

“Please rise, all of you,” said Tripitaka. “There’s no need for regret. Let’s hope that he’ll find the cassock and everything will be all right. But if not, I’d fear for your lives; for that disciple of mine has a bad temper, and I’m afraid that none of you’ll escape him.” When the monks heard this, they were all panic-stricken; they pleaded with Heaven for the cassock to be found so that their lives would be preserved. The Great Sage Sun having leaped up into the air, gave 1 twist of his torso and arrived at once at the Black Wind Mountain. Stopping his cloud, he looked carefully and saw that it was indeed a magnificent mountain, especially in this time of spring. *See many streams potently flowing, countless cliffs vying for beauty. The birds call but no man is seen; though flowers fall, the tree’s yet scented. The rain passes, the sky’s one moist sheet of blue; the wind comes, the pines rock like screens of jade. The mountain grass sprouts, the wildflowers bloom on hanging cliffs and high ranges. The wisteria grows, the handsome trees bud on rugged peaks and flat plateaus. You don’t even meet a recluse. Where can you find a woodsman?*

*By the stream the cranes drink in pairs; on the rocks wild apes madly play. Augustly the branches spread their luscious green, basking their splendour in bright mountain mist.* Pilgrim was enjoying the scenery when suddenly he heard voices coming from beyond a lovely grass meadow. With light, stealthy steps, he inched forward and hid himself beneath a cliff to have a peep. He saw three monsters sitting on the ground: a swarthy fellow in the middle, a Daoist to the left, and a white-robed scholar to the right. They were in the midst of an animated conversation, discussing how to establish the tripod and the oven, how to knead the cinnabar and refine the mercury, the topics of white snow and yellow sprout, ‘and the esoteric doctrines of heterodox Daoism. As they were speaking, the swarthy fellow said, laughing, “The day after tomorrow will be the date of my mum’s labour. Will you two gentlemen pay me a visit?”

“Every year we celebrate the Great King’s birthday,” said the white-robed scholar. “How could we think of not coming this year?”

“Last night I came upon a treasure,” said the swarthy fellow, “which may be called a brocaded robe of God. It’s a most attractive thing, and I think I’m going to use it to enhance my birthday. I plan to give a large banquet, starting tomorrow, and to invite all our Daoist friends of various mountains to celebrate this garment. We’ll call the party the Festival of the Divine robe. How about that?”

“Marvellous! Marvellous!” said the Daoist, laughing. “First I’ll come to the banquet tomorrow, and then I’ll bring you good wishes on your birthday the day after.”

When Pilgrim heard them speaking about a robe of God, he was certain that they were referring to his own treasure. Unable to suppress his anger, he leaped clear of his hiding place and raised high the golden-hooped rod with both hands, shouting, “You larcenous monsters! You stole my cassock. What Festival of the Divine robe do you think you’re going to have? Give it back to me at once and don’t try to run away!” Wielding his rod, he struck at their heads. In panic, the swarthy fellow fled by riding the wind, and the Daoist escaped by mounting the clouds. The white-robed scholar however, was killed by one stroke of the rod, and he turned out to be the spirit of a white-spotted snake when Pilgrim pulled his body over for closer examination. He picked up the corpse again and broke it into several pieces before proceeding deep into the mountain to look for the swarthy fellow. Passing pointed peaks and rugged ridges, he found himself in front of a hanging cliff with a cave dwelling below it. *See mist and smoke abundant, cypress and pine umbrageous. Mist and smoke abundant, their hues surround the door; cypress and pine umbrageous, their green entwines the gate. Flat, dried wood supports a bridge. Wisterias coil round the ridge. Birds carrying red petals reach the cloudy gorge. And deer tread on florets to comb the rocky flats. Before that door the flowers bloom with the season as the wind wafts their fragrance. Atop the dyke-shading willows orioles sing; over the bank’s sweet peaches butterflies flit. This rustic spot though no cause for much praise, still rivals the beauty of Mount Penglai.* <sup>2</sup>Pilgrim went to the door and found that the two stone doors were tightly closed. On top of the door was a stone tablet, on which was plainly written in large letters:

Black Wind Mountain, Black Wind Cave

He lifted his rod to beat at the door crying, “Open the door!”

A little demon who stood guard at the door came out and asked, “Who’re you that you dare beat at our mortal cave?”

“You damnable beast!” scolded Pilgrim. “What sort of a place is this, that you dare assume the title of ‘mortal’? Is the word *mortal* for you to use? Hurry inside and tell that swarthy fellow to bring out your venerable dad’s cassock at once. Then I may spare the lives of the whole nest of you.”

The little demon ran swiftly inside and reported: “Great King! You’ll not have a Festival of the Divine robe. There’s a monk with a hairy face and a thunder-god mouth outside demanding the cassock.”

That swarthy fellow, after being chased by Pilgrim from the grass meadow, had just managed to reach the cave. He had not even been able to sit down when he again heard this announcement, and he thought to himself: “I wonder where this fellow came from, so arrogant that he dared show up making demands at my door!” He asked for his armour, and, after putting it on, he walked outside holding a lance with black tassels. Pilgrim stood on one side of the gate, holding his iron rod and glaring. The monster indeed cut a formidable figure: *a bowl-like helmet of dark burnished steel; a black-gold cuirass that shone most bright. A black silk robe with wide wind-bagging sleeves and dark green sashes with long, long tassels. He held in his hands a black-tasselled lance. He wore on his feet two black-leather boots. His eyes’ golden pupils like lightning flashed. He was thus in this mountain the Black Wind King.* “This fellow,” said Pilgrim, smiling to himself, “looks exactly like a kiln worker or a coal miner. He must scrub charcoal here for a living! How did he get to be black all over?”

The monster called out in a loud voice, “What kind of a monk are you that you dare to be so impudent around here?”

Rushing up to him with his iron rod, Pilgrim roared, “No idle conversation! Return the cassock of your venerable grandpa at once!”

“What monastery are you from, bonze?” asked the monster, “and where did you lose your cassock that you dare show up at my place and demand its return?”

“My cassock,” said Pilgrim, “was stored in the back room of the Guanyin Hall due north of here. Because of the fire there, you committed robbery by taking advantage of the confusion; after making off with the garment, you even wanted to start a Festival of the Divine robe to celebrate your birthday. Do you deny this? Give it back to me quickly, and I’ll spare your life. If you but mutter half a ‘no,’ I’ll overturn the Black Wind Mountain and level the Black Wind Cave. Your whole cave of demons will be pulverized!”

When the monster heard these words, he laughed scornfully and said, “You audacious creature! You yourself set the fire last night, for you’re the one who summoned the wind on top of the roof. I took the cassock all right but what are you going to do about it? Where do you come from, and what is your name? What ability do you’ve, that you dare mouth such reckless words?” Pilgrim said, “So you don’t recognise your venerable grandpa! He is the disciple of the Master of the Law, Tripitaka who happens to be the brother of the Throne in the Great Tang Nation. My surname is Sun, and my given name is Wukong Pilgrim. If I tell you my abilities, you’ll be frightened out of your wits and die right on the spot!”

“I’ll not,” said the monster. “Tell me what abilities you’ve.”

“My son,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “brace yourself! Listen carefully!<sup>3</sup> *Great since my youth’s my magic power; I changed with the wind to display my might. Long I trained my nature and practiced Truth to flee the wheel of karma with my life. With mind sincere I always sought the Way; seedlings of herbs I plucked on Mount Lingtai.* <sup>4</sup>*There’s in that mountain an old mortal. His age: a hundred-and-eight millennia! He became my master most solemnly and showed me the way to longevity saying that in my body were physic and pills that one’d work in vain to seek outside. He gave me those high secrets of the gods; with no foundation I’d have been lost. My inner light relighted, I sat in peace as sun and moon mated within myself.* <sup>5</sup>*I thought of nothing – all my desires gone, body strengthened, six senses cleansed. From age back to youth’s an easy boon; to join transcendent’s no distant goal. 3 years without leaks<sup>6</sup> made a godlike frame, immune to sufferings known to mortal men. Playing through the Ten Islets and Three Isles, I made the rounds at Heaven’s very edge. I lived like that for some three centuries though not yet ascended to the 9-fold Heaven. Taming sea dragons brought me treasure true: the golden-hooped rod I did find below. As field marshal at the Flower-Fruit Mount, monsters I gathered at Water-Curtain Cave. Then the Jade Emperor gave to me the name Equal to Heaven – such, the rank most high. Thrice I caused havoc in Divine Mists Hall; once I stole peaches from the Mum Queen. Thus came a hundred thousand men divine to curb me with their rows of spears and swords. The Deity-King was beaten back to Heaven while Nata in pain led his troops and fled. Xiansheng Master<sup>7</sup> knew transformations well; with him I waged a contest and fell. Laozi, Guanyin, and the Jade Emperor all watched the battle at South Heaven Gate. When Laozi decided to lend his help, Erlang brought me to Heaven’s magistrate. To the monster-routing pillar I was tied; the gods were told to have my head cut off. Failing to harm me with either sledge or sword, they’d blast and burn me with thunderclaps. What skills indeed did this old monkey have who’s not even half a whit afraid! Into Laozi’s brazier they sent me next to have me slowly cooked by fire divine. The day the lid’s opened I jumped out and ran through Heaven brandishing a rod. Back and forth I prowled with none to stop me, making havoc through all thirty-six Heavens. Then Siddhartha revealed his power: under Mount Five Phases he’d me clamped and there I squirmed for a full five centuries till by luck Tripitaka left the Tang court. Now I go west having yielded to Truth to see Jade Eyebrows at Great Thunderclap.* <sup>8</sup>*Go and ask in the four corners of the universe: you’ll learn I’m the famous ranking daemon of all time!*”

When the monster heard these words, he laughed and said, “So you’re the Ban-Horse-Plague who disturbed the Celestial Palace?” What most annoyed Pilgrim was when people called him Ban-Horse-Plague. The moment he heard that name, he lost his temper. “You monstrous rogue!” he shouted. “You’d not return the cassock you stole and yet dare insult this holy monk. Don’t run away! Watch this rod!” The swarthy fellow jumped aside to dodge the blow; wielding his long lance, he went forward to meet his opponent. That was some battle between the 2 of them: *the compliant rod, the black-tasselled lance. 2 men display their power before the cave: stabbing at the heart and face; striking at the head and arm. This one proves handy with a death-dealing rod; that one tilts the lance for swift, triple jabs. The white tiger climbing the mountain extends his paws; the yellow dragon lying on the road<sup>9</sup> turns his back. With coloured mists flying and bright flashes of light, 2 monster-gods’ strength is yet to be tried. 1 is the truth-seeking, Equal-to-Heaven Sage; 1 is the Great Black King who’s now a spirit. Why wage this battle in the mountain still? The cassock for which each would aim to kill!* That monster fought with Pilgrim for more than ten rounds until about noon but the battle was a draw. Using his lance to halt the rod for a moment, the swarthy fellow said, “Pilgrim Sun, let’s put away our weapons for the time being. Let me have some lunch first and then I’ll wage a further contest with you.” “Accursed beast!” said Pilgrim. “You want to be a hero? Which hero wants to eat after fighting for merely half a day? Consider old monkey who was imprisoned beneath the mountain for altogether five centuries and he hadn’t even tasted a drop of water. So, what’s this about being hungry? Don’t give me any excuses and don’t run away! Give me back my cassock, and I’ll allow you to go and eat.” But that monster only managed to throw one more feeble thrust with his lance before dashing into the cave and shutting his stone doors. He dismissed his little demons and made preparations for the banquet, writing out invitation cards to the monster kings of various mountains. Pilgrim had no success in breaking down the door and so had to return to the Guanyin Hall. The clerics of that monastery had already buried the old monk, and they were all gathered in the back room to minister to the Tang Monk, serving him lunch soon after he had finished breakfast. As they were scurrying about fetching soup and hauling water, Pilgrim was seen descending from the sky. The monks saluted courteously and received him into the back room to see Tripitaka. “Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “so you’ve returned. How is the cassock?”

“At least I found the real culprit,” said Pilgrim. “It was a good thing that we didn’t punish these monks, for the monster of Black Wind Mountain did steal it. I went secretly looking for him, and saw him seated on a beautiful grass meadow having a conversation with a white-robed scholar and an old Daoist. He was, in a sense, making a confession without being tortured, saying something about the day after tomorrow being his birthday, when he would invite all the other griffins for the occasion. He also mentioned that he had found an embroidered Divine robe last night, in celebration of which he was planning to throw a large banquet, calling it the Festival of the Divine robe. Old monkey rushed up to them and struck out with his rod; the swarthy fellow changed into the wind and left, and the Daoist also disappeared. The white-robed scholar however, was killed, and he turned out to be a white-spotted snake who had become a spirit. I quickly chased the swarthy fellow to his cave and demanded that he come out to fight. He had already admitted that he took the cassock but we fought to a draw after half a day of battle. The monster returned to his cave because he wanted to eat; he closed his stone doors tightly and refused to fight anymore. I came back to see how you’re and to make this report to you. Since I know the whereabouts of the cassock, I’m not worried about his unwillingness to give it back to me.” When the various monks heard this, some of them folded their hands while others respected, all reciting, “I submit to the Infinite Light! Now that the whereabouts of the cassock is known, we’ve a claim to our lives again.”

“Don’t celebrate yet,” said Pilgrim, “for I’ve not yet recovered it, nor has my master left. Wait until we’ve the cassock so that my master can walk peacefully out of this door before you start cheering. If there’s the slightest mishap, old monkey is no customer to be provoked, is he? Have you served some good things to my master? Have you given our horse plenty of hay?” “We’ve, we’ve, we’ve!” cried the monks hastily. “Our service to the holy monk has not slackened in the least!” “You’re gone only half a day,” said Tripitaka, “and I’ve been served tea three times and have had two vegetarian meals. They didn’t dare slight me. You’d therefore make a great effort to get back the cassock.”

“Don’t rush!” said Pilgrim. “Since I know where he is, I’ll certainly capture this fellow and return the garment to you. Relax! Relax!” As they were speaking, the abbot brought in some more vegetarian dainties to serve to the holy monk Sun. Pilgrim ate some and left at once on the hallowed cloud to search for the monster. As he was travelling, he saw a little demon approaching from the main road who had a box made of pear tree wood wedged between his left arm and his body. Suspecting that something important was inside the box, Pilgrim raised his rod and brought it down hard on the demon’s head. Alas, the demon could not take such a blow! He was instantly reduced to a meat patty that Pilgrim tossed to the side of the road. When he opened the box, there was indeed an invitation slip, on which was written:

Your student-servant, the Bear, most humbly addresses the Exalted Aged Dean of the Golden Pool. For the gracious gifts you’ve bestowed on me on several occasions I’m profoundly grateful. I regret that I was unable to assist you last night when you’re visited by a god of Fire but I suppose that Your Holy Eminence has not been adversely affected in any way. Your student by chance has acquired a Divine robe, and this occasion calls for a festive celebration. I’ve therefore prepared with care some fine juice for your enjoyment with the sincere hope that Your Holy Eminence will be pleased to give us a visit. This invitation’s respectfully submitted 2 days in advance.

When Pilgrim saw this, he roared with laughter, saying, “That old carcass! He didn’t lose anything by his death! So he belonged to a monster’s gang! Small wonder that he lived to his two hundred and seventieth year! That monster, I suppose, must have taught him some little magic like ingesting his breath,<sup>10</sup> and that was how he enjoyed such longevity. I can still remember how he looked. Let me change myself into that monk and go to the cave to see where my cassock is located. If I can manage it, I’ll take it back without wasting my energy.” Dear Great Sage! He recited a spell, faced the wind, and changed at once into an exact semblance of that old monk. Putting away his iron rod, he strode to the cave, crying, “Open the door!” When the little demon who stood at the door saw such a figure, he quickly made his report inside: “Great King, the Elder of the Golden Pool has arrived.” Greatly surprised, the monster said, “I just sent a little one to deliver an invitation to him but he could not possibly have reached his destination even at this moment. How could the old monk arrive so quickly? I suppose the little one did not run into him on the way but Pilgrim Sun must have asked him to come here for the cassock. You, steward, hide the cassock! Don’t let him see it!”

Walking through the front door, Pilgrim saw in the courtyard pines and bamboos sharing their green, peaches and plums competing in their glamour; flowers were blooming everywhere, and the air was heavy with the scent of orchids. It was quite a grotto-heaven. He saw moreover a parallel couplet mounted on both sides of the 2<sup>nd</sup> doorway that read:

*A deep mountain retreat without worldly cares.*

*A divine cave secluded – what joy serene.*

Pilgrim said to himself, “This fellow is also one who withdraws from dirt and dust, a fiendish creature who knows his fate.”<sup>11</sup> He walked through the door and proceeded further; when he passed through the third doorway, he saw carved beams with elaborate ornaments and large windows brightly decorated. Then the swarthy fellow appeared, wearing a casual jacket made of fine dark-green silk, topped by a crow-green cape of figured damask; he wore a head-wrap of black cloth and was shod in a pair of black suede boots. When he saw Pilgrim entering, he tidied his clothes and went down the steps to receive him, saying, “Golden Pool, old friend, we’ve not seen each other for days. Please take a seat! Please take a seat!” Pilgrim greeted him ceremoniously, after which they sat down and drank tea.

After tea, the monster saluted low and said, “I just sent you a brief note, humbly inviting you to visit me the day after tomorrow. Why does my old friend grant me that pleasure today, already?” “I was just coming to pay my respects,” said Pilgrim, “and I didn’t anticipate meeting your kind messenger. When I saw that there was going to be a Festival of the Divine robe, I came hurriedly, hoping to see the garment.”

“My old friend may be mistaken,” said the monster, laughing. “This cassock originally belonged to the Tang Monk who was staying at your place. Why would you want to look at it here, since you must surely have seen it before?”

“Your poor monk,” answered Pilgrim, “did borrow it but he did not have the opportunity last night to examine it before it was taken by the Great King. Moreover, our monastery, including all our belongings, was destroyed by fire, and the disciple of that Tang Monk was rather bellicose about the matter. In all that confusion, I’d not find the cassock anywhere, not knowing that the Great King in his good fortune found it. That is why I came specially to see it.”

As they were speaking, 1 of the little demons out on patrol came back to report: “Great King, disaster! The junior officer who went to deliver the invitation’s beaten to death by Pilgrim Sun and left by the wayside. Our enemy followed the clue and changed himself into the Golden Pool Elder so that he’d obtain the divine robe by fraud.”

When the monster heard that, he said to himself, “I was wondering already why he came today and in such a hurried manner too! So it’s really he!” Leaping up, he grabbed his lance and aimed it at Pilgrim. Whipping out the rod from his ear, Pilgrim assumed his original form and parried the lance. They rushed from the living room to the front courtyard, and from there they fought their way out to the front door. The monsters in the cave were frightened out of their wits; young and old in that household were horror-stricken. This fierce contest before the mountain was even unlike the last one. *What a fight! This Monkey King boldly posed as a monk; that swarthy chap wisely concealed the robe. Back and forth went their clever repartee, adapting to each instant perfectly. He’d see the cassock but had no means: this runic treasure’s a mystery indeed! The small imp on patrol announced mishap; the old fiend in anger showed his power. They fought their way out of the Black Wind Cave, the rod and the lance forced a trial by might. The rod checked the lance, their noise resounding; the lance met the rod, causing sparks to fly. The changes of Wukong, all unknown to men; the monster’s magic skills, so rare on earth. This one wanted for his birthday fete a Divine robe. Would that one with no cassock go home in peace? The bitter fight this time seemed without end. Even a life descending could not break them up!* From the entrance of the cave the 2 of them fought up to the peak of the mountain and from the peak of the mountain they fought their way up to the clouds. Belching wind and fog, kicking up sand and rocks, they fought until the red sun sank toward the west but neither of them could gain the upper hand. The monster said, “Hey, Sun! Stop for a moment! It’s getting too late to fight any more. Go away! Come back tomorrow morning and we’ll decide your fate.”

“Don’t run away, my son,” cried Pilgrim. “If you want to fight, act like a fighter! Don’t give me the excuse that it’s getting late.”

With his rod, he rained blows indiscriminately on his opponent’s head and face but the swarthy fellow changed once more into a clear breeze and went back to his cave. Tightly bolting his stone doors, he refused to come out. Pilgrim had no alternative except to go back to the Guanyin Hall. Dropping down from the clouds, he said, “Master.” Tripitaka who was waiting for him with bulging eyes was delighted to see him; but when he did not see the cassock, he became frightened again. “How it’s that you’ve still not brought back the cassock?” he asked. Pilgrim took out from his sleeve the invitation slip and handed it over to Tripitaka, saying, “Master, the monster and that old carcass used to be friends. He sent a little demon here with this invitation for him to go to a Festival of the Divine robe. I killed the little demon and changed into the form of the old monk to get inside the cave. I managed to trick him into giving me a cup of tea but when I asked for the cassock, he refused to show it to me. As we’re sitting there, my identity was leaked by someone on patrol in the mountain, and we began to fight. The battle lasted until this early evening and ended in a draw. When the monster saw that it was late, he slipped back into the cave and tightly bolted up his stone door. Old monkey had no choice but to return here for the moment.”

“How’s your skill as a fighter when compared with his?” asked Tripitaka. “Not much better,” said Pilgrim. “We’re quite evenly matched.” Tripitaka then read the invitation slip and handed it to the abbot, saying, “Could it be that your master was also a monster-spirit?” Falling to his knees, the abbot said, “Old Dad, my master is human. Because that Great Black King attained the way of humanity through self-cultivation, he frequently came to the monastery to discuss religious texts with my master. He imparted to my master a little of the magic of nourishing one’s spirit and ingesting breath; hence they address each other as friends.”

“This bunch of monks here,” said Pilgrim, “don’t have the aura of monsters: each one has a round head pointing to the sky and a pair of feet set flat on the earth. They are a little taller and heavier than old monkey but they are no monsters. Look at what’s written on the slip: ‘your student-servant, the Bear.’ This creature must be a black bear who has become a spirit.” Tripitaka said, “I’ve heard from the ancients that the bear and the ape are of the same kind. They are all beasts, in other words. How can this bear become a spirit?”

“Old monkey is also a beast,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “but I became the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. Is he any different? All the creatures of this world who possess the nine apertures can become mortals through the art of self-cultivation.”

“You just said that the two of you’re evenly matched,” said Tripitaka again. “How can you defeat him and recover my cassock?”

“Lay off! Lay off!” said Pilgrim. “I know what to do.”

As they were discussing the matter, the monks brought in the evening meal for master and disciple. Afterwards, Tripitaka asked for lamps to go to the Chan hall in front to rest. The rest of the monks reclined against the walls beneath some temporary awnings and slept while the back rooms were given to accommodate the senior and junior abbots. It was now late. *See the Silver Stream aglow; the air perfectly pure; the sky full of bright and twinkling stars; the river marked by receding tide. All sounds are hushed; hills emptied of birds. The angler’s fire dies by the brook; the lamps grow faint on the pagoda. Last night Acharyas sounded drums and bells. Only weeping’s heard throughout this night!* So they spent the night in the Chan hall but Tripitaka was thinking about the cassock. *How’d I possibly sleep well?* As he tossed and turned, he suddenly saw the windows growing bright. He arose at once and called: “Wukong, it’s morning. Go find the cassock quickly.” Pilgrim leaped up with a bound and saw that the monks were bringing in washing water. “All of you,” said Pilgrim, “take care to minister to my master. Old monkey’s leaving.”

Getting up from his bed, Tripitaka clutched at him, asking, “Where’re you going?”

“Come to think of it,” said Pilgrim, “this whole affair reveals the irresponsibility of the Nun Guanyin. She’s a Chan hall here where she’s enjoyed the incense and worship of all the local people and yet she can permit a monster-spirit to be her neighbour. I’m leaving for the South Sea to find her for a little conversation. I’m going to ask her to come here and demand that the monster return the cassock to us.”

"When'll you be back?" asked Tripitaka.  
"Probably right after breakfast," answered Pilgrim. "At the latest, I'd be back around noon when everything should be taken care of. All of you monks must take care to wait on my master. Old monkey's leaving." He said he was leaving and the next instant he was already out of sight. In a moment, he arrived at the South Sea where he stopped his cloud to look around. He saw *a vast expanse of ocean where water and sky seemed to merge. Auspicious light shrouded the earth; hallowed air brightened the world. Endless snow-capped waves surged up to Heaven; layers of misty billows washed out the sun. Water flying everywhere; waves churning all around. Water flying everywhere rolled like thunderclaps; waves churning all around boomed like cannonade. Speak not merely of water; let's look more at the centre. The treasure-filled mountain of five dazzling colours: Red, yellow, green, deep purple, and blue. If this be Guanyin's scenic region true, look further at Potalaka of South Sea. What a splendid place!*

*The tall mountain peak cut through airy space. In its midst were thousands of rare flowers, 100 kinds of divine herbs. The wind stirred the precious trees; the sun shone on the golden lotus. Glazed tiles covered the Guanyin Hall; tortoiseshell spread before the Tidal-Sound Cave. In the shades of green willow the parrot spoke; within the bamboo grove the peacock recited. On rocks with grains like fingerprints, the guardians fierce and solemn. Before the cornelian foreshore, liberation strong and heroic.* Pilgrim who could hardly take his eyes off the marvellous scenery, lowered his cloud and went straight to the bamboo grove. The various deities were there to receive him saying, "The Nun told us some time ago about the conversion of the Great Sage for whom she'd nothing but praise. You're supposed to be accompanying the Tang Monk at this moment. How do you've the time to come here?"

"Because I'm accompanying the Tang Monk," said Pilgrim, "I'd an incident on our journey about which I must see the Nun. Please announce my arrival."  
The deities went to the mouth of the cave to make the announcement and the Nun asked him to enter. Obeying the summons, Pilgrim went before the bejewelled lotus platform and knelt down. "What're you doing here?" asked the Nun. "On his journey my master came across one of your Chan halls," said Pilgrim, "where you receive the services of fire and incense from the local people. But you also permitted a Black Bear Spirit to live nearby and to steal the cassock of my master. Several times I tried to get it back but without success. I've come specifically to ask you for it." The Nun said, "This monkey still speaks insolently! If the Bear Spirit stole your cassock, why did you come to ask me for it? It was all because you had the presumption, you wretched ape, to show off your treasure to sinister people. Moreover, you had your share of evildoing when you called for the wind to intensify the fire that burned down one of my way stations down below. And yet you still want to be rowdy around here?" When Pilgrim heard the Nun speaking like that, he realised that she had knowledge of past and future events. Hurriedly he saluted with humility and said, "Nun, please pardon the offence of your disciple. It was as you said. But I'm upset by the monster's refusal to give us back our cassock, and my master is threatening to recite that spell of his at any moment. I can't bear the headache, and that's why I've come to cause you inconvenience. I beseech the Nun to have mercy on me and help me capture that monster, so that we may recover the garment and proceed toward the West." "That monster has great magical power," said the Nun, "really just as strong as yours. All right! For the sake of the Tang Monk, I'll go with you this time." When Pilgrim heard this, he saluted again in gratitude and asked the Nun to leave at once. They mounted the blessed clouds and soon arrived on the Black Wind Mountain. Dropping down from the clouds, they followed a path to look for the cave.

As they were walking, they saw a Daoist coming down the mountain slope, holding a glass tray on which there were two magic pills. Pilgrim ran right into him, whipped out his rod, and brought it down squarely on his head with one blow causing the brains to burst and blood to shoot out from the neck. Completely stunned, the Nun said, "Monkey, you're still so reckless! He didn't steal your cassock; he neither knew nor wronged you. Why did you kill him with one blow?"

"Nun," said Pilgrim, "you may not recognise him but he is a friend of the Black Bear Spirit. Yesterday he was having a conversation with a white-robed scholar on the grass meadow. Since they were invited to the cave of the Black Bear Spirit who was going to give a Festival of the Divine robe to celebrate his birthday, this Daoist said that he would first go to celebrate his friend's birthday today and then attend the festival tomorrow. That's how I recognised him. He must have been on his way to celebrate the monster's birthday."

"If that's how it is, all right," said the Nun. Pilgrim then went to pick up the Daoist and discovered that he was a grey wolf. The tray that had fallen to one side, had an inscription on the bottom: "Made by Master Transcending Void."

When Pilgrim saw this, he laughed and said, "What luck! What luck! Old monkey will benefit; the Nun will save some energy. This monster may be said to have made a confession without torture while the other monster may be destined to perish today."

"What are you saying, Wukong?" said the Nun. "Nun," said Pilgrim, "I, Wukong, have a saying: plot should be met with plot. I don't know whether you'll listen to me or not."

"Speak up!" said the Nun.

"Look, Nun!" said Pilgrim. "There are two magic pills on this little tray, and they are introductory gifts that we'll present to the monster. Beneath the tray is the five-word inscription 'Made by Master Transcending Void,' and this shall serve as our contact with the monster. If you'll listen to me, I'll give you a plan that will dispense with weapons and do away with combat. In a moment, the monster will meet pestilence; in the twinkling of an eye, the Divine robe will reappear. If you don't follow my suggestion, you may go back to the West, and I, Wukong, will return to the East; the Divine robe will be counted as lost while Tripitaka Tang will have journeyed in vain."

"This monkey is pretty clever with his tongue!" said the Nun, laughing. "Hardly!" said Pilgrim. "But it is a small plan!"

"What's your plan?" asked the Nun. "Since the tray has this inscription beneath it," said Pilgrim, "the Daoist himself must be this Master Transcending Void. If you agree with me, Nun, you can change yourself into this Daoist. I'll take one of the pills and then change myself into another pill – a slightly bigger one, that is. Take this tray with the two magic pills and present them to the monster as his birthday gift. Let the monster swallow the bigger pill, and old monkey will accomplish the rest. If he is unwilling to return the Divine robe, old monkey will make one – even if I've to weave it with his guts!"

The Nun could not think of a better plan and she had to nod her head to show her approval. "Well?" said Pilgrim, laughing. Immediately the Nun exercised her great mercy and boundless power. With her infinite capacity for transformation, her mind moved in perfect accord with her will, and her will with her body: in one blurry instant, she changed into the form of the mortal Master Transcending Void. *Her crane-down cloak swept by the wind with airy steps she'd pace the void. Her face aged like cypress and pine, shows fair, fresh features never seen. She moves with freedom without end, a special self-sustaining Thus! In sum all return to one Form but from bodies perverse set free.* When Pilgrim saw the transformation, he cried, "Marvellous, Marvellous! Is the monster the Nun or is the Nun the monster?"

The Nun smiled and said, "Wukong, the Nun and the monster – they both exist in a single thought. Considered in terms of their origin, they're all nothing." Immediately enlightened, Pilgrim turned around and changed at once into a magic pill: *a rolling-pan steadying pearl – round, bright, of no known recipe. Fused 3 × 3<sup>12</sup> at Mount Goulou; <sup>13</sup>forged 6 × 6 with Shao Weng's<sup>14</sup> help. Like glazed tiles and yellow gold flames it shines with sun and mani's light. Its coat of mercury and lead has power not with ease assessed.* The pill into which Pilgrim had changed was slightly larger than the other one. Making a mental note of it, the Nun took the glass tray and went straight to the entrance of the monster's cave. She paused to look around and saw *deep gorges, parlous cliffs, clouds rising from the peaks; green pines and cypresses, and wind rustling in the woods. Deep gorges, parlous cliffs: a place truly made for monsters and not for man! But green pines and cypresses might seem fit for pious recluse to seek the Way. The mountain has a stream and the stream has water, its current murmurs lightly as a lute worthy to cleanse your ears. The cliff has deer, the woods have cranes where softly hums the poems of the spheres to lift your spirit. So it was the bogus mortal's luck that Complete Liberation came: to vouchsafe boundless mercy was her vow.* After looking over the place, the Nun was secretly pleased and said to herself, "If this cursed beast could occupy such a mountain, it might be that he's destined to attain the Way."

Thus she was already inclined to be merciful. When she walked up to the cave's entrance, some of the little demons standing guard there recognised her saying, "Mortal Transcending Void's arrived." Some went to announce her arrival while others greeted her. Just then, the monster came saluting out the door saying, "Transcending Void, you honour my humble abode with your divine presence!"

"This humble Daoist," said the Nun, "respectfully submits an elixir pill as a birthday gift." After the 2 of them had saluted to each other, they were seated. The incidents of the day before were mentioned but the Nun made no reply. Instead, she took up the tray and said, "Great King, please accept the humble regard of this little Daoist." She chose the large pill and pushed it over to the monster, saying,

"May the Great King live for a millennium!"

The monster then pushed the other pill over to the Nun saying, "I wish to share this with Master Transcending Void." After this ceremonial presentation, the monster was about to swallow it but the pill rolled by itself right down his throat. *It changed back into its original form and began to do physical exercises!*

The monster fell to the ground while the Nun revealed her true form and recovered the Divine robe from the monster. Pilgrim then left the monster's body through his nose but fearing that the monster might still be truculent, the Nun threw a fillet on his head. As he arose, the monster did indeed pick up his lance to thrust at Pilgrim. The Nun however, rose into the air and began reciting her spell. The spell worked and the monster felt excruciating pain on his head; throwing away the lance, he rolled wildly all over the ground. In mid-air, the Handsome Monkey King nearly collapsed with laughter; down below the Black Bear Monster almost rolled himself to death on the ground. "Cursed beast," said the Nun, "will you now surrender?"

"I surrender," said the monster with no hesitation, "please spare my life!"

Fearing that too much effort would have been wasted, Pilgrim wanted to strike at once. Quickly stopping him, the Nun said, "Don't hurt him; I've some use for him."

Pilgrim said, "Why not destroy a monster like him, for of what use can he be?"

"There's no one guarding the rear of my Potalaka Mountain," said the Nun, "and I want to take him back there to be a Great Mountain-Guardian God."

"Truly a salvific and merciful goddess," said Pilgrim, laughing, "who'll not hurt a single sentient being. If old monkey knew a spell like that, he'd recite it a thousand times. That'd finish off as many black bears as there're around here!"

So the monster regained consciousness after a long time. Convinced by the unbearable pain, he had no choice but to fall on his knees and beg: "Spare my life for I'm willing to submit to Truth!"

Dropping down from the blessed luminosity, the Nun then touched his head and gave him the commandments, telling him to wait on her, holding the lance. So it was with the Black Bear: *today his vaulting ambition is checked; this time his boundless license has been curbed.* "You may return now, Wukong," instructed the Nun, "and serve the Tang Monk attentively. Start no more trouble with your carelessness."

"I'm grateful that the Nun's willing to come this far to help," said Pilgrim, "and it's my duty as disciple to see you back."

"You may be excused," said the Nun. Holding the cassock Pilgrim then respected to her and left while the Nun led the bear and returned to the great ocean. A testimonial poem says:

*Auspicious light surrounds the golden form: what maze of colours so worthy of praise!  
She shows great mercy to succour mankind, reveal gold lotus as she scans the world.  
She comes all because of scripture seeking; then she withdraws, as ever chaste and pure.  
The fiend converted, she leaves for the sea; a Religious regains a brocade-cassock.*

## 018

### The Tang Monk leaves his ordeal at Guanyin Hall; the Great Sage casts out the monster at Gao Village

Pilgrim took leave of the Nun. Lowering the direction of his cloud, he hung the cassock on one of the fragrant cedars nearby. He took out his rod and fought his way into the Black Wind Cave. But where could he find even a single little demon inside? The fact of the matter was that when they saw the Nun's epiphany, causing the old monster to roll all over the ground, they all scattered. Pilgrim however, was not to be stopped; he piled dried wood around the several doorways in the cave and started a fire in the front and in the back. The whole Black Wind Cave was reduced to a "Red Wind Cave"! Picking up the cassock, Pilgrim then mounted the auspicious luminosity and went north. We now tell you about Tripitaka who was impatiently waiting for Pilgrim's return and wondering whether Nun had consented to come and help, or whether Pilgrim on some pretext had left him. He was filled with such foolish thoughts and wild speculations when he saw bright, rose-coloured clouds approaching in the sky. Dropping at the foot of the steps and kneeling, Pilgrim said, "Master, the cassock's here!"

Tripitaka was most delighted, and not one of the monks could hide his pleasure. "Good! Good!" they cried. "Now we've found our lives again!" Taking the cassock, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, when you left in the morning, you promised to come back either after breakfast or sometime around noon. Why do you return so late, when the sun is already setting?" Pilgrim then gave a thorough account of how he went to ask for the Nun's help, and how she in her transformation had subdued the monster. When Tripitaka heard the account, he prepared an incense table at once and worshipped, facing south. Then he said, "Disciple, since we've the Divine robe, let us pack up and leave."

"No need to rush like that," said Pilgrim. "It's getting late, hardly the time to travel. Let's wait until tomorrow morning before we leave."

All the monks knelt down and said, "Elder Sun is right. It is getting late, and, moreover, we've a vow to fulfil. Now that we're all saved and the treasure has been recovered, we must redeem our vow and ask the venerable elders to distribute the blessing.<sup>1</sup> Tomorrow we'll see you off to the West."

"Yes, yes, that's very good!" said Pilgrim. *Look at those monks!*

They all emptied their pockets and presented all the valuables they had managed to salvage from the fire. Everyone made some contribution. They prepared some vegetarian offerings, burned paper money to request perpetual peace, and recited several scrolls of scriptures for the prevention of calamities and deliverance from evil. The service lasted until late in the evening. The next morning they



saddled the horse and took up the luggage while the monks accompanied their guests for a great distance before turning back. As Pilgrim led the way forward, it was the happiest time of spring. See *the horse making light tracks on grassy turfs; gold threads of willow swaying with fresh dew. Peaches and apricots fill the forest happy. Creepers grow with vigour along the way. Pairs of sun-warmed ducks rest on sandy hanks; the brook's fragrant flowers tame the butterflies. Thus autumn goes, winter fades, and spring's half gone; when will merit be made and the True Writ found?* Master and disciple travelled for some six or seven days in the wilderness. 1 day when it was getting late, they saw a village in the distance. “Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “look! There’s a village over there. How about asking for lodging for the night before we travel again tomorrow?”

“Let’s wait until I’ve determined whether it is a good or bad place before we decide,” said Pilgrim. The master pulled in the reins as Pilgrim stared intently at the village. Truly there were *dense rows of bamboo fences; thick clusters of thatched huts. Sky-scraping wild trees faced the doorways; the winding brooklet reflected the houses. Willows by the path unfurled their lovely green; fragrant were the flowers blooming in the yard. At this time of twilight fast fading, the birds chattered everywhere in the woods. As kitchen smoke arose, cattle returned on every lane and path, you saw, too, well-fed goats and chickens sleeping by the house’s edge, and the old, sotted neighbour coming with* a poem. After surveying the area, Pilgrim said, “Master, you may proceed. It appears to be a village of good families where it’ll be appropriate for us to seek shelter.”

The priest urged the white horse on, and they arrived at the beginning of a lane heading into the village where they saw a young man wearing a cotton head-wrap and a blue jacket. He had an umbrella in his hand and a bundle on his back; his trousers were rolled up, and he had on his feet a pair of straw sandals with three loops. He was striding along the street in a resolute manner when Pilgrim grabbed him, saying, “Where are you going? I’ve a question for you: what is this place?” Struggling to break free, the man protested, “Isn’t there anyone else here in the village? Why must you pick me for your question?”

“Patron,” said Pilgrim genially, “don’t get upset. ‘Helping others is in truth helping yourself.’ What’s so bad about your telling me the name of this place? Perhaps I can help you with your problems.” Unable to break out of Pilgrim’s grip, the man was so infuriated that he jumped about wildly. “Jinxed! I’m jinxed!” he cried. “No end to the grievances I’ve suffered at the hands of my family elders and I still have to run into this bald-headed fellow and suffer such indignity from him!”

“If you’ve the ability to pry open my hand,” said Pilgrim, “I’ll let you go.” The man twisted left and right without any success: it was as if he had been clamped tight with a pair of iron tongs. He became so enraged that he threw away his bundle and his umbrella; with both hands, he rained blows and scratches on Pilgrim. With one hand steadying his luggage, Pilgrim held off the man with the other, and no matter how hard the man tried, he could not scratch or even touch Pilgrim at all. The more he fought, the firmer was Pilgrim’s grip, so that the man was utterly exasperated.

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “isn’t someone coming over there? You can ask someone else. Why hang onto him like that? Let the man go.”

“Master, you don’t understand,” said Pilgrim, laughing. “If I ask someone else, all the fun will be gone. I’ve to ask him if, as the saying goes, ‘there’s going to be any business!’” Seeing that it was fruitless to struggle any more, the man said finally, “This place is called the Mr. Gao Village in the territory of the Kingdom of Qoco. Most of the families here in the village are surnamed Gao, and that’s why the village is so called. Now please let me go.”

“You’re hardly dressed for a stroll in the neighbourhood,” said Pilgrim, “so tell me the truth. Where are you going, and what are you doing anyway? Then I’ll let you go.”

The man had little alternative but to speak the truth. “I’m a member of the family of old Mr. Gao, and my name is Gao Cai. Old Mr. Gao has a daughter, his youngest, in fact who is twenty years old and not yet betrothed. Three years ago however, a monster-spirit seized her and kept her as his wife. Having a monster as his son-in-law bothered old Mr. Gao terribly. He said, ‘My daughter having a monster as her spouse can hardly be a lasting arrangement. First, my family’s reputation is ruined, and second, I don’t even have any in-laws with whom we can be friends.’ All that time he wanted to have this marriage annulled but the monster absolutely refused; he locked the daughter up instead in the rear building and would not permit her to see her family for nearly half a year. The old man, therefore, gave me several taels of silver and told me to find an exorcist to capture the monster. Since then, I’ve hardly rested my feet; I managed to turn up three or four persons, all worthless monks and impotent Daoists. None of them could subdue the monster. A short while ago I received a severe scolding for my incompetence, and with only half an ounce more of silver as a travel allowance, I was told to find a capable exorcist this time. I didn’t expect to run into you, my unlucky star, and now my journey is delayed. That’s what I meant by the grievances I’d suffered in and out of the family, and that’s why I was protesting just now. I didn’t know you had this trick of holding people that I’d not overcome. Now that I’ve told you the truth, please let me go.”

“It’s really your luck,” said Pilgrim, “coupled with my vocation: they fit like the numbers four and six when you throw the dice! You needn’t travel far, nor need you waste your money. We’re not worthless monks or impotent Daoists, for we really do have some abilities; we’re most experienced in fact in capturing monsters. As the saying goes, ‘You’ve now not only a caring physician but now you’ve cured your eyes as well!’ Please take the trouble of returning to the head of your family and tell him that we’re holy monks sent by the Throne in the Land of the East to go worship God in the Western Heaven and acquire scriptures. We’re most capable of seizing monsters and binding fiends.”

“Don’t mislead me,” said Gao Cai, “for I’ve had it up to here! If you’re deceiving me and really don’t have the ability to take the monster, you’ll only cause me more grievances.” Pilgrim said, “I guarantee that you’ll not be harmed in any way. Lead me to the door of your house.” The man could not think of a better alternative; he picked up his bundle and umbrella and turned to lead master and disciple to the door of his house. “You two elders,” he said, “please rest yourselves for a moment against the hitching posts here. I’ll go in to report to my master.” Only then did Pilgrim release him. Putting down the luggage and dismounting from the horse, master and disciple stood and waited outside the door.

Gao Cai walked through the main gate and went straight to the main hall in the centre but it just so happened that he ran right into old Mr. Gao. “You thick-skinned beast!” railed Mr. Gao. “Why aren’t you out looking for an exorcist? What are you doing back here?” Putting down his bundle and umbrella, Gao Cai said, “Let me humbly inform my lord. Your servant just reached the end of the street and ran into two monks: one riding a horse and the other hauling a load. They caught hold of me and refused to let go, asking where I was going. At first I absolutely refused to tell them but they were most insistent and I’d no means of freeing myself. It was only then that I gave them a detailed account of my lord’s affairs. The one who was holding me was delighted, saying that he would arrest the monster for us.”

“Where did they come from?” asked old Mr. Gao. “He claimed to be a holy monk, the brother of the emperor,” said Gao Cai, “who was sent from the Land of the East to go worship God in the Western Heaven and acquire scriptures.”

“If they are monks who have come from such a great distance,” said old Mr. Gao, “they may indeed have some abilities. Where are they now?”

“Waiting outside the front door,” said Gao Cai.

Old Mr. Gao quickly changed his clothes and came out with Gao Cai to extend his welcome, crying, “Your Grace!” When Tripitaka heard this, he turned quickly, and his host was already standing in front of him. That old man had on his head a dark silk wrap; he wore a robe of Sichuan silk brocade in spring-onion white with a dark green sash, and a pair of boots made of rough steer hide. Smiling affably, he addressed them, saying, “Honoured Priests, please accept my salute!” Tripitaka returned his greeting but Pilgrim stood there unmoved. When the old man saw how hideous he looked, he did not salute him. “Why don’t you say hello to me?” demanded Pilgrim. Somewhat alarmed, the old man said to Gao Cai: “Young man! You’ve really done me in, haven’t you? There is already an ugly monster in the house that we can’t drive away. Now you’ve to fetch this thunder-spirit to cause me more troubles!”

“Old Gao,” said Pilgrim, “it’s in vain that you’ve reached such old age, for you’ve hardly any discernment! If you want to judge people by appearances, you’re utterly wrong! I, old monkey, may be ugly but I’ve some abilities. I’ll capture the monster for your family, exorcise the fiend, apprehend that son-in-law of yours, and get your daughter back. Will that be good enough? Why all these mutterings about appearances!” When the old man heard this, he trembled with fear but he managed to pull himself together sufficiently to say, “Please come in!” At this invitation, Pilgrim led the white horse and asked Gao Cai to pick up their luggage so that Tripitaka could go in with them. With no regard for manners, he tethered the horse on one of the pillars and drew up a weather-beaten lacquered chair for his master to be seated. He pulled over another chair and sat down on one side. “This little priest,” said old Mr. Gao, “really knows how to make himself at home!”

“If you’re willing to keep me here for half a year,” said Pilgrim, “then I’ll truly feel at home!”

After they were seated, old Mr. Gao asked, “Just now my little one said that you two honoured priests came from the Land of the East?”

“Yes,” replied Tripitaka. “Your poor monk was commissioned by the court to go to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures for God. Since we’ve reached your village, we’d like to ask for lodging for the night. We plan to leave early tomorrow morning.”

“So the two of you wanted lodging?” said old Mr. Gao. “Then why did you say you’d catch monsters?”

“Since we’re asking for a place to stay,” said Pilgrim, “we thought we might as well catch a few monsters, just for fun! May we ask how many monsters there are in your house?”

“My God!” exclaimed old Mr. Gao, “How many monsters could we feed? There’s only this one son-in-law, and we’ve suffered enough from him!”

“Tell me everything about the monster,” said Pilgrim, “how he came to this place, what sort of power he has, and so forth. Start from the beginning and don’t leave out any details. Then I can catch him for you.”

“From ancient times,” said old Mr. Gao, “this village of ours has never had any troubles with ghosts, goblins, or fiends; in fact, my sole misfortune consists of not having a son. I’d three daughters born to me: the eldest is named Fragrant Orchid; the second one, Jade Orchid; and the third, Green Orchid. The first two since their youth had been promised to people belonging to this same village but I’d hoped that the youngest would take a husband who would stay with our family and consent to have his children bear our name. Since I’ve no son, he would in fact become my heir and look after me in my old age. Little did I expect that about three years ago, a fellow would turn up who was passably good-looking. He said that he came from the Fuling Mountain and that his surname was Bullseye (Bull). Since he had neither parents nor brothers, he was willing to be taken in as a son-in-law, and I accepted him, thinking that someone with no other family attachment was exactly the right sort of person. When he first came into our family, he was, I must confess, fairly industrious and well-behaved. He worked hard to loosen the earth and plough the fields without even using a buffalo; and when he harvested the grains, he did the reaping without sickle or staff. He came home late in the evening and started early again in the morning, and to tell you the truth, we’re quite happy with him. The only trouble was that his appearance began to change.”

“In what way?” asked Pilgrim.

“Well,” said old Mr. Gao, “when he first came, he was a stout, swarthy fellow but afterwards he turned into an idiot with huge ears and a long horn with a great tuft of bristles behind his head. His body became horribly coarse and hulking. In short, his whole appearance was that of a bull! And what an enormous appetite! For a single meal, he has to have three to five bushels of rice: a little snack in the morning means over a hundred biscuits or rolls. It’s a good thing he keeps a vegetarian diet, if he liked meat and juice, the property and estate of this old man would be consumed in half a year!”

“Perhaps it’s because he’s a good worker,” said Tripitaka, “that he has such a good appetite.”

“Even that appetite is a small problem!” said old Mr. Gao. “What is most disturbing is that he likes to come riding the wind and disappears again astride the fog; he kicks up stones and dirt so frequently that my household and my neighbours have not had a moment’s peace. Then he locked up my little girl, Green Orchid, in the back building, and we’ve not seen her for half a year and don’t know whether she’s dead or alive. We’re certain now that he is a monster, and that’s why we want to get an exorcist to drive him away.”

“There’s nothing difficult about that,” said Pilgrim. “Relax, old man! Tonight I’ll catch him for you, and I’ll demand that he sign a document of annulment and return your daughter. How’s that?” Immensely pleased, old Mr. Gao said, “My taking him in was a small thing, when you consider how he has ruined my good reputation and how many relatives of ours he had alienated! Just catch him for me. Why bother about a document? Please, just get rid of him for me.” Pilgrim said, “It’s simple! When night falls, you’ll see the result!”

The old man was delighted; he asked at once for tables to be set and a vegetarian feast to be prepared. When they had finished the meal, evening was setting in. The old man asked, “What sort of weapons and how many people do you need? We’d better prepare soon.”

“I’ve my own weapon,” replied Pilgrim. The old man said, “The only thing the two of you’ve is that priestly staff, hardly something you can use to battle the monster,” whereupon Pilgrim took an embroidery needle out of his ear, held it in his hands, and waving it once in the wind, changed it into a golden-hooped rod with the thickness of a rice bowl. “Look at this rod,” he said to old Mr. Gao.

“How does it compare with your weapons? Think it’ll do for the monster?”

“Since you’ve a weapon,” said old Mr. Gao again, “do you need some attendants?”

“No need for any attendants,” said Pilgrim. “All I ask for is some decent elderly persons to keep my master company and talk with him, so that I may feel free to leave him for a while. I’ll catch the monster for you and make him promise publicly to leave, so that you’ll be rid of him for good.” The old man at once asked his houseboy to send for several intimate friends and relatives who soon arrived. After they were introduced, Pilgrim said, “Master, you may feel quite safe sitting here. Old monkey is off!”

Look at him! Lifting high his iron rod, he dragged old Mr. Gao along, saying, “Lead me to the back building where the monster is staying so that I may have a look.” The old man indeed took him to the door of the building in the rear. “Get a key quickly!” said Pilgrim.

“Take a look yourself,” said old Mr. Gao. “If I’d use a key on this lock, I’d not need you.”

Pilgrim laughed and said, “Dear old man! Though you’re quite old, you can’t even recognise a joke! I was just teasing you a little, and you took my words literally.” He went forward and touched the lock: it was solidly welded with liquid copper. Annoyed, Pilgrim smashed open the door with 1 terrific blow of his rod and found it was pitch black inside. “Old Gao,” said Pilgrim, “go give your daughter a call and see if she is there inside.”

Summoning up his courage, the old man cried, “Miss Three!”

Recognising her dad's voice, the girl replied faintly, "Papa! I'm over here!"

His golden pupils ablaze, Pilgrim peered into the dark shadows. See that *her cloudlike hair is unkempt and un-brushed; jade-like face is grimy and unwashed. Though her nature refined is unchanged, her lovely image is weary and wan. Her cherry lips seem completely bloodless, body is both crooked, and bent. Knitted in sorrow the moth-brows<sup>2</sup> are pallid; weakened by weight loss, the speaking voice is faint.* She came forward and when she saw that it was old Mr. Gao, she clutched at him and began to wail. "Stop crying! Stop crying!" said Pilgrim. "Let me ask you: where's the monster?"

"I don't know where he's gone," said the girl. "Nowadays he leaves in the morning and comes back only after nightfall. Surrounded by cloud and fog, he comes and goes without ever letting me know where he is. Since he has learned that dad is trying to drive him away, he takes frequent precautions; that's why he comes only at night and leaves in the morning."

"No need to talk anymore," Pilgrim said. "Old Man! Take your beloved daughter to the building in front, and then you can spend all the time you want with her. Old monkey will be here waiting for him; if the monster doesn't show up, don't blame me. But if he comes at all, I'll pull out the weeds of your troubles by the roots!" With great joy, old Mr. Gao led his daughter to the front building. Exercising his magic might, Pilgrim shook his body and changed at once into the form of that girl, sitting all by herself to wait for the monster. In a little while, a gust of wind swept by, kicking up dust and stones. What a wind! *At first it was a breeze gentle and light. Thereafter it became gusty and strong. A light, gentle breeze that could fill the world! A strong, gusty wind that nothing else could stop! Flowers and willow snapped like shaken hemp; trees and plants were felled like uprooted crops. It stirred up streams and seas, cowing ghosts and gods. It fractured rocks and mountains, awing Heaven and Earth. Flower-nibbling deer lost their homeward trail. Fruit-picking monkeys all were gone astray. The seven-tiered pagoda crashed on God's head. Flags on eight sides damaged the temple's top. Gold beams and jade pillars were rooted up. Like flocks of swallow flew the roofing tiles. The boatman lifted his oars to make a vow eager to have his livestock sacrificed. The local spirit abandoned his shrine. Dragon kings from 4 seas made humble salutes. At sea the ship of Nature spirit ran aground while half of Great Wall's rampart was blown down.* When the violent gust of wind had gone by, there appeared in mid-air a monster who was ugly indeed. With his black face covered with short, stubby hair, his long horn and huge ears, he wore a cotton shirt that was neither quite green nor quite blue. A sort of spotted cotton handkerchief was tied round his head. Pilgrim said, smiling to himself, "So, I've to do business with a thing like this!" Dear Pilgrim! He neither greeted the monster, nor did he speak to him; he lay on the bed instead and pretended to be sick, moaning all the time. Unable to tell the true from the false, the monster walked into the room and, grabbing his *spouse*, he at once demanded a kiss. "He really wants to sport with old monkey!" said Pilgrim, smiling to himself. Using a holding trick, he caught the long horn of that monster and gave it a sudden, violent twist, sending him crashing to the floor with a loud thud. Picking himself up, the monster supported himself on the side of the bed and said, "Sister, how's it that you seem somewhat annoyed with me today? Because I'm late perhaps?"

"I'm not annoyed!" said Pilgrim.

"If not," said that monster, "why did you give me such a fall?"

"How can you be so boorish," said Pilgrim, "grabbing me like that and wanting to kiss me? I don't feel very well today under normal conditions I'd have been up waiting for you and opened the door myself. You may take off your clothes and go to sleep."

The fiend did not suspect anything and took off his clothes. Pilgrim jumped up and sat on the chamber pot while the fiend climbed into bed. Groping around, he could feel no one and called out, "Sister, where've you gone? Please take off your clothes and go to sleep."

"You go to sleep first," said Pilgrim, "for I've to wait until I've dropped my load." The fiend indeed loosened his clothes and stayed in bed. Suddenly Pilgrim gave out a sigh saying, "My luck's pretty low!"

"What's bothering you?" said the monster. "What do you mean, your luck's pretty low? It's true that I've consumed quite a bit of food and drink since I entered your family but I certainly did not take them as free meals. Look at the things I did for your family: sweeping the grounds and draining the ditches, hauling bricks and carrying tiles, building walls and pounding mortar, ploughing the fields and raking the earth, planting seedlings of rice and wheat – in short, I took care of your entire estate. Now what you've on your body happens to be brocade, and what you wear as ornaments happens to be gold. You enjoy the flowers and fruits of four seasons, and you've fresh vegetables for the table in all eight periods. Whatever makes you so dissatisfied that you've to sigh and lament, saying your luck's pretty low?"

"It isn't quite as you say," said Pilgrim. "Today my parents gave me a severe scolding over the partition wall, throwing bricks and tiles into this place."

"What were they scolding you for?" asked the monster. Pilgrim said, "They said that since we've become husband and wife, you're in fact a son-in-law in their family but one who is completely without manners. A person as ugly as you is unpresentable: you can't meet your brothers-in-law, nor can you greet the other relatives. Since you come with the clouds and leave with the fog, we really don't know what family you belong to and what your true name is. In fact, you've ruined our family's reputation and defiled our legacy. That was what they rebuked me for, and that's why I'm upset."

"Though I'm somewhat homely," said the monster, "it's no great problem if they insist on my being more handsome. We discussed these matters before when I came here, and I entered your family fully with your dad's consent. Why did they bring it up again today? My family is located in the Cloudy Paths Cave of Fulling Mountain; my surname is based on my appearance. Hence I'm called Niu (Bull), and my official name is Ganglie (Stiff Bristles). If they ever ask you again, tell them what I've told you."

"This monster is quite honest," said Pilgrim to himself, secretly pleased. "Without torture, he has already made a plain confession; with his name and location clearly known, he will certainly be caught, regardless of what may happen." Pilgrim then said to him, "My parents are trying to get an exorcist here to arrest you."

"Go to sleep! Go to sleep!" said the monster, laughing. "Don't mind them at all! I know as many transformations as the number of stars in the Heavenly Ladle,<sup>3</sup> and I own a nine-pronged muckrake. Why should I fear any exorcist, monk, or Daoist priest? Even if your old man were pious enough to be able to get the Monster-Routing Patriarch to come down from the 9-fold Heaven, I'd still claim to have been an old acquaintance of his. And he wouldn't dare do anything to me."

"But they were saying that they hoped to invite someone by the name of Sun," said Pilgrim, "the so-called Great Sage Equal to Heaven who caused havoc in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago. They were going to ask him to come catch you." When the monster heard this name, he became rather alarmed. "If that's true," he said, "I'm leaving. We can't live as a couple anymore!"

"Why do you've to leave so suddenly?" asked Pilgrim. "You may not know," said the monster, "that that Ban-Horse-Plague who caused such turmoil in Heaven has some real abilities. I fear that I'm no match for him, and losing my reputation is not my form!"

When he had finished speaking, he slipped on his clothes, opened the door, and walked right out. Pilgrim grabbed him, and with one wipe of his own face he assumed his original form, shouting: "Monster where do you think you're going? Take a good look and see who I'm!" The monster turned around and saw the protruding teeth, the gaping mouth, the fiery eyes, the golden pupils, the pointed head, and the hairy face of Pilgrim – virtually a living thunder god! He was so horrified that his hands became numb and his feet grew weak. With a loud ripping sound, he tore open his shirt and broke free of Pilgrim's clutch by changing into a violent wind. Pilgrim rushed forward and struck mightily at the wind with his iron rod; the monster at once transformed himself into myriad shafts of flaming light and fled toward his own mountain. Mounting the clouds, Pilgrim pursued him, crying, "Where're you running to? If you ascend to Heaven, I'll chase you to the Palace of the Polestar, and if you go down into the Earth, I'll follow you into the heart of Hell!" *Good Heavens!*

**019**

**At Cloudy Paths Cave, Wukong takes in 8 Rules; At Pagoda Mountain, Tripitaka receives the Heart Thread**

The flaming light of the monster who was fleeing while the Great Sage riding the rosy clouds followed right behind. As they were thus proceeding, they came upon a tall mountain where the monster gathered together the fiery shafts of light and resumed his original form. Racing into a cave, he took out a nine-pronged muckrake to fight. "Lawless monster!" shouted Pilgrim. "What region are you from, fiend, and how do you know old monkey's names? What abilities do you've? Make a full confession quickly and your life may be spared!"

"So you don't know my powers!" said that monster. "Come up here and brace yourself! I'll tell you! *My mind was dim since the time of youth; always I loved my indolence and sloth. Neither nursing nature nor seeking the Real, <sup>1</sup>I passed my days deluded and confused. I met a true mortal suddenly who sat and spoke to me of cold and heat.<sup>2</sup> Repent,' he said, 'and cease your worldly way: from taking life accrues a boundless curse. One day when the Great Limit ends your lot for eight woes and three ways' you'll grieve too late! I listened and turned my will to mend my ways: I heard, repented, and sought the wondrous rune. By fate my teacher he became at once, pointing out passes keyed to Heaven and Earth. Taught to forge the Great Pill Nine Times Reversed, <sup>4</sup>I worked without pause through day and night<sup>5</sup> to reach Mud-Pill Palace<sup>6</sup> topping my skull and Jetting-Spring Points<sup>7</sup> on soles of my feet. With kidney brine flooding the Floral Pool, <sup>8</sup>my Cinnabar Field<sup>9</sup> was thus warmly nursed. Baby and Fair Girl<sup>10</sup> mated as yin and yang; lead and mercury mixed as sun and moon. In concord Li-dragon and Kan-tiger<sup>11</sup> used, the spirit turtle sucked dry the gold crow's blood.<sup>12</sup> Three flowers joined on top,<sup>13</sup> the root reclaimed; Five breaths faced their source<sup>14</sup> and all freely flowed. My merit done, I ascended on high, met by pairs of mortals from the sky. Radiant pink clouds arose beneath my feet; with light, sound frame I faced the Golden Arch. The Jade Emperor gave a banquet for gods who sat in rows according to their ranks. Made a marshal of the Celestial Stream, I took command of both sailors and ships. Because Queen Mum gave the Peaches Feast – when she met her guests at the Jasper Pool – my mind turned hazy for I got dead drunk, a shameless rowdy reeling left and right. Boldly I barged into Vast Cold Palace<sup>15</sup> where the charming fairy received me in. When I saw her face that would snare one's soul, my carnal itch of old could not be stopped! Without regard for manners or for rank, I grabbed Miss Chang'e<sup>16</sup> asking her to bed. For three or four times she rejected me: hiding east and west, she was sore annoyed. My passion sky-high I roared like thunder, almost toppling the arch of Heaven's gate. Inspector General<sup>17</sup> told the Emperor Jade; I was destined that day to meet my fate. The Vast Cold completely enclosed airtight left me no way to run or to escape. Then I was caught by the various gods, undaunted still for juice's in my heart. Bound and taken to see the Emperor Jade, by law I'd have been condemned to death. It's Venus the Gold Star, Mr. Li who left the ranks and knelt to beg for me. My punishment changed to two thousand blows, flesh was torn; bones almost cracked. Alive! I was banished from Heaven's gate to make my home beneath the Fulling Mount. An errant womb's my sinful destination: Stiff-Bristle Bull's my worldly appellation!"*

When Pilgrim heard this, he said, "So you're actually the Water God of the Heavenly Reeds who came to earth. Small wonder you knew old monkey's name."

"Curses!" cried the monster. "You Heaven-defying Ban-Horse-Plague! When you caused such turmoil that year in Heaven, you'd no idea how many of us had to suffer because of you. And here you're again to make life miserable for others! Don't give me any lip! Have a taste of my rake!" Pilgrim of course was unwilling to be tolerant; lifting high his rod, he struck at the monster's head. The 2 of them thus began a battle in the middle of the mountain at midnight. *What a fight! Pilgrim's gold pupils blazed like lightning; the monster's round eyes flashed like silver blooms. This one spat out coloured fog: that 1 spouted crimson mist. The spouted crimson mist lit up the dark; the coloured fog spat out made bright the night. The golden-hooped rod; the 9-pronged muckrake. 2 true heroes most worthy of acclaim: 1 was the Great Sage descended to earth; 1 was a Marshal who came from Heaven. That 1 became a monster for indecorum; this 1 saluted to a monk to flee his ordeal. The rake lunged like a dragon wielding his claws: the rod came like a phoenix darting through flowers. That 1 said: "Your breaking up a marriage's like patricide!" This 1 said: "You'd be arrested for raping a young girl!" Such idle words! Such wild clamour! Back and forth the rod blocked the rake. They fought till dawn was about to break when the monster's 2 arms felt sore and numb.* From the time of the second watch, the 2 of them fought until it was growing light in the east. That monster could hold out no longer and fled in defeat. He changed once more into a violent gust of wind and went straight back to his cave shutting the doors tightly and refusing to come out. Outside the cave, Pilgrim saw a large stone tablet that had on it the inscription:

*Cloudy Paths Cave*

By now it was completely light. Realising that the monster was not going to come out, Pilgrim thought to himself, "I fear that Master may be anxiously waiting for me. I may as well go back and see him before returning here to catch the monster." Mounting the clouds, he soon arrived at Old Gao village. Tripitaka chatted about past and present with the other elders and did not sleep all night. He was just wondering why Pilgrim had not shown up when suddenly the latter dropped down into the courtyard. Straightening out his clothes and putting away his rod, Pilgrim went up to the hall, crying, "Master! I've returned!"

The various elders hurriedly saluted low saying, "Thank you for all the trouble you've been to!"

"Wukong, you're gone all night," said Tripitaka. "If you captured the monster where is he now?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "that monster's no fiend of this world, nor he's a strange beast of the mountains. He's actually the disciple of the Marshal of the Heavenly Reeds. Because he took the wrong path of rebirth, his appearance assumed the form of a wild bull: but actually his spiritual nature's not been extinguished. He said that he derived his surname from his appearance and went by the name of Bullseye Ganglie. He tried to escape by changing into a violent gust of wind when I attacked him with my rod in the rear building; I then struck at the wind, he changed into shafts of flaming light, and retreated to his mountain cave. There he took out a nine-pronged muckrake to do battle with old monkey for a whole night. Just now when it grew light, he'd fight no longer and fled into the cave shutting the doors tightly and coming out no more. I wanted to break down the door to finish him off but was afraid that you might be waiting here anxiously. That's why I came back first to give you some news." When he had finished speaking, old Mr. Gao came forward and knelt down saying, "Honoured Priest, I've no alternative but to say this. Though you've chased him away, he might come back here after you leave. What'd we do then? I may as well ask you to do us the favour of apprehending him so that we'll have no further worries. I assure you this old man will be grateful and kind; there'll be a generous reward for you. I'll ask my relatives and friends to witness the drawing up of a document whereby I'll divide my possessions and my property equally with you. All I want is to pluck up the trouble by the root so that the pure virtue of our Gao family won't be tainted."

"Aren't you being rather demanding, old man?" said Pilgrim laughing. "That monster did tell me that although he's an enormous appetite, consumed a good deal of food, and drink from your family, he's also done a lot of good work for you. Much of what you're able to accumulate these last few years you owe to his strength so that he's really taken no free meals from you. Why do you wanna have him driven away ever? According to him, he's a god who's come down to earth and helped your family earn a living. Moreover, he's harmed your daughter in no way. I'd think such a son-in-law would be a good match for your daughter and family. So what's all this about ruining your family's reputation and damaging your standing in the community? Why not really accept him as he's?"

"Honoured Priest," said old Mr. Gao, "though this matter may not offend public morals, it does leave us with a bad name. Like it or not, people will say, 'The Gao family's taken in a monster as a son-in-law!' How can one stand remarks of that kind?"

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, "if you've worked for him all this while, you might as well see him through to a satisfactory conclusion."

Pilgrim said, "I was testing him a little, just for fun. This time when I go, I'll apprehend the monster for certain and bring him back for you all to see. Don't worry, old Gao! Take good care of my master. I'm off!"

He said he was off, and the next instant he was completely out of sight. Bounding up that mountain, he arrived at the cave's entrance; a few strokes of the iron rod reduced the doors to dust. "You overstuffed coolie!" he shouted, "Come out quickly and fight with old monkey!"

Huffing and puffing, the monster was lying in the cave and trying to catch his breath. When he heard his doors being struck down and heard himself called *an over-stuffed coolie*, he could not control his wrath. Dragging his rake, he pulled himself together and ran out. "A Ban-Horse-Plague like you," he yelled, "is an absolute pest! What've I done to you that you've to break my doors to pieces? Go and take a look at the law: a man who breaks someone's door and enters without permission may be guilty of trespassing, a crime punishable by death!"

"Idiot!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "I may have broken down the door but my case's still a defensible one. But you, you took a girl from her family by force – without using the proper matchmakers and witnesses, nor presenting the proper gifts of money and juice. If you ask me, you're the one guilty of a capital crime!"

"Enough of this idle talk," said the monster, "and watch out for old bull's rake!"

Parrying the rake with his rod, Pilgrim said, "Isn't that rake of yours just something you use as a regular farmhand to plough the fields or plant vegetables for the Gao family? Why on earth I'd fear you?"

"You've made a mistake!" said the monster. "Is this rake a thing of this world? Just listen to my recital: *this is divine ice steel greatly refined, polished so highly that it glows and shines. Laozi wielded the large hammer and tong; Mars himself added charcoals piece by piece. Five Kings of Five Quarters applied their schemes; twelve gods of time expended all their skills. They made nine prongs like dangling teeth of jade and brass rings were cast with dropping gold leaves. Decked with five stars and six brightness, its frame conformed to eight spans and four climes. Its whole length set to match the cosmic scheme accorded with yin yang with the sun and moon: six-Diagram Gods etched as Heaven ruled; <sup>18</sup>eight-Trigram Stars stood in ranks and files. They named this the High Treasure Golden Rake, a gift for Jade Emperor to guard his court. Since I learned to be a great mortal, becoming someone with longevity, I was made Marshal of the Heavenly Reeds and given this rake, a sign of royal grace. When it's held high, there'll be bright flames and light; when it's brought low, strong wind blows down white snow. The warriors of Heaven all fear it; the Ten Kings of Hell all shrink from it. Are there such weapons among mankind? In this wide world there's no such fine steel. It changes its form after my own wish, rising and falling after my command. I've kept it with me for several years, a daily comrade I never parted from. I've stayed with it right through the day's three meals, nor left it when I went to sleep at night. I brought it along to the Peaches Feast and with it I attended Heaven's court. Since I wrought evil relying on juice since trusting my strength I displayed my fraud, Heaven sent me down to this world of dust where in my next life I'd sin some more. With wicked mind I ate men in my cave, pleased to be married at the Gao Village. This rake can overturn sea dragons' and turtles' lairs and rake up mountain dens of tigers and wolves. All other weapons there's no need to name, only my rake's of most fitting fame. To win in battle? Why, it's no hard thing! And making merit? It needn't be said! You may have a bronze head, an iron brain, and a full steel frame. I'll rake till your soul melts and your spirit leaks!*"

When Pilgrim heard these words, he put away his iron rod and said, "Don't brag too much, Idiot! Old monkey will stretch out his head right here, and you can give him a blow. See if his soul melts and his spirit leaks!" The monster did indeed raise his rake high and bring it down with all his might; with a loud bang, the rake made sparks as it bounced back up. But the blow did not make as much as a scratch on Pilgrim's head. The monster was so astounded that his hands turned numb and his feet grew weak. He mumbled, "What a head! What a head!"

"You didn't know about this, did you?" said Pilgrim. "When I caused such turmoil in Heaven by stealing the magic pills, the mortal peaches, and the imperial juice, I was captured by the Little Sage Erlang and taken to the Polestar Palace. The various celestial beings chopped me with an axe, pounded me with a bludgeon, cut me with a scimitar, jabbed me with a sword, burned me with fire, and struck me with thunder – all this could not hurt me one whit. Then I was taken by Laozi and placed in his eight-trigram brazier, in which I was refined by divine fire until I'd fiery eyes and diamond pupils, a bronze head and iron arms. If you don't believe me, give me some more blows and see whether it hurts me at all."

"Monkey," said the monster, "I remember that at the time you're causing trouble in Heaven, you lived in the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, in the Aolai Country of the East East-Videha Continent. Your name hasn't been heard of for a long time. How is it that you suddenly turn up at this place to oppress me? Could my dad-in-law have gone all that way to ask you to come here?"

"Your dad-in-law did not go to fetch me," said Pilgrim. "It's old monkey who turned from wrong to right who left the Daoist to follow the Religious. I'm now accompanying the royal brother of the Great Tang Emperor in the Land of the East whose name is Tripitaka, Master of the Law. He is on his way to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God. We passed through the Gao Village and asked for lodging; old man Gao then brought up the subject of his daughter and asked me to rescue her and to apprehend you, you overstuffed coolie!"

Hearing this, the monster threw away his muckrake and said with great affability, "Where is the scripture pilgrim? Please take the trouble of introducing me to him."

"Why do you want to see him?" asked Pilgrim. The monster said, "I was a convert of the Nun Guanshiyin who commanded me to keep a vegetarian diet here and to wait for the scripture pilgrim. I was to follow him to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from a god, so that I might atone for my sins with my merit and regain the fruits of Truth. I've been waiting for a number of years without receiving any further news. Since you've been made his disciple, why didn't you mention the search for scriptures in the first place? Why did you've to unleash your violence and attack me right at my own door?"

"Don't try to soften me with deception," said Pilgrim, "thinking that you can escape that way. If you're truly sincere about accompanying the Tang Monk, you must face Heaven and swear that you're telling the truth. Then I'll take you to see my master." At once the monster knelt down and respected as rapidly as if he were pounding rice with his head. "Infinite Light," he cried, "Namo God! If I'm not speaking the truth in all sincerity, let me be punished as one who has offended Heaven – let me be hewn to pieces!"

Hearing him swear such an oath, Pilgrim said, "All right! You light a fire and burn up this place of yours; then I'll take you with me." The monster accordingly dragged in bunches of rushweed and thorns and lighted the fire; the Cloudy Paths Cave soon looked like a derelict potter's kiln. "I've no other attachment," he said to Pilgrim. "You can take me away."

"Give me your muckrake and let me hold it," said Pilgrim, and our monster at once handed it over. Yanking out a piece of hair, Pilgrim blew onto it and cried, "Change!" It changed into a three-ply hemp rope with which he prepared to tie up the monster's hands. Putting his arms behind his back, the monster did nothing to stop himself from being bound. Then Pilgrim took hold of his ear and dragged him along, crying, "Hurry! Hurry!"

"Gently, please!" pleaded the monster. "You're holding me so roughly and my ear's hurting!"

"I can be no gentler," said Pilgrim, "for I can't worry about you now. As the saying goes, 'The nicer the goat, the nastier the grip!' After you've seen my master and proved your worth, I'll let you go."

Rising up to a distance halfway between cloud and fog, they headed straight for the Gao Family Village. A poem as a testimony says: <sup>19</sup>

*Strong is metal's nature to vanquish wood: mind Monkey's the Wood Dragon subdued.*

*With metal and wood both obedient as 1, all their love, virtue will grow, and show.*

*1 guest and 1 hos<sup>20</sup> there's nothing between; 3 mating, 3 unions – there's great mystery!<sup>21</sup>*

*Nature and feelings gladly fused as last and first: <sup>22</sup>both will surely be enlightened in the West.*

In a moment they had arrived at the village. Grasping the rake and pulling at the monster's ear, Pilgrim said, "Look at the one sitting in a most dignified manner up there in the main hall: that's my master."

When old Mr. Gao and his relatives suddenly saw Pilgrim dragging by the ear a monster who had his hands bound behind his back, they all gladly left their seats to meet them in the courtyard. The old man cried, "Honoured Priest! There's that son-in-law of mine."

The monster went forward and fell on his knees, respecting to Tripitaka and saying, "Master, your disciple apologises for not coming to meet you. If I'd known earlier that my master's staying in my dad-in-law's house, I'd have come at once to pay my respects and none of these troubles would've befallen me."

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, "how did you manage to get him here to see me?" Only then did Pilgrim release his hold. Using the handle of the rake to give the monster a whack, he shouted, "Idiot! Say something!"

The monster gave a full account of how the Nun had converted him. Greatly pleased, Tripitaka said at once, "Mr. Gao, may I borrow your incense table?" Old Mr. Gao took it out immediately and Tripitaka lighted the incense after purifying his hands. He saluted toward the south, saying, "I thank the Nun for her holy grace!" The other elders all joined in the worship by adding incense, after which Tripitaka resumed his seat in the main hall and asked Wukong to untie the monster. Pilgrim shook his body to retrieve his hair, and the rope fell off by itself. Once more the monster saluted to Tripitaka, declaring his intention to follow him to the West, and then saluted also to Pilgrim addressing him as *elder brother* because he was the senior disciple. "Since you've entered my fold and have decided to become my disciple," said Tripitaka, "let me give you a religious name so that I may address you properly."

"Master," said the monster, "the Nun already laid hands on my head and gave me the commandments and a religious name that's Bullseye Aware of Ability (Awakened to Power)."

"Good! Good!" said Tripitaka, laughing. "Your elder brother's named Wukong and you're called Aware of Ability; your names are well in accord with the emphasis of our denomination."

"Master," said Aware of Ability, "since I received the commandments from the Nun, I was completely cut off from the five forbidden viands and the three undesirable foods. I maintained a strict vegetarian diet in my dad-in-law's house, ever touching no forbidden food. Now that I've met my master today, let me be released from my vegetarian vow."

"No, no!" said Tripitaka. "Since you've not eaten the five forbidden viands and the three undesirable foods, let me give you another name. Let me call you 8 Rules."<sup>23</sup>

Delighted, Idiot said, "I'll obey my master."

For this reason, he was also called Bullseye 8 Rules. When old Mr. Gao saw the happy ending of this whole affair, he was more delighted than ever. He ordered his houseboys immediately to prepare a feast to thank the Tang Monk. 8 Rules went forward and tugged at him, saying, "Papa, please ask my humble wife to come out and greet the grandpas and uncles. How about it?"

"Worthy brother!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "Since you've embraced Religion and become a monk, please don't ever mention *your humble wife* again. There may be a married Daoist in this world but there's no such monk, is there? Let's sit down rather and have a nice vegetarian meal. We'll have to start off soon for the West."

Old Mr. Gao set the tables in order and invited Tripitaka to take the honoured seat in the middle: Pilgrim and 8 Rules sat on both sides while the relatives took the remaining seats below. Mr. Gao opened a bottle of dietary juice and filled a glass: he sprinkled a little of the juice on the ground to thank Heaven and Earth before presenting the glass to Tripitaka. "To tell you the truth, aged sir," said Tripitaka, "this poor monk's been a vegetarian from birth. I've touched no kind of forbidden food since childhood."

"I know the reverend teacher is chaste and pure," said old Mr. Gao, "and I didn't dare bring forth any forbidden foodstuff. This juice's made for those who maintain a vegetarian diet: there's no harm in your taking a glass."

"I just don't dare use juice," said Tripitaka. "for the prohibition of strong drink is a monk's first commandment."

Alarmed, Aware of Ability said, "Master, though I kept a vegetarian diet, I didn't cut out juice."

"Though my capacity is not great," said Wukong, "and I'm unable to handle more than a crock or so, I've not discontinued the use of juice either."

"In that case," said Tripitaka, "you two brothers may take some of this pure juice. But you're not permitted to get drunk and cause trouble." So the 2 of them took the first round before taking their seats again to enjoy the feast. What a richly laden table that was and varieties of delicacies were presented cannot be told you in full. After master and disciples had been feted, old Mr. Gao took out a red lacquered tray bearing some 200 taels of gold and silver in small pieces that were to be presented to the 3 priests for travel expenses. There were moreover 3 outer garments made of fine silk. Tripitaka said, "We're mendicants who beg for food and drink from village to village. How'd we accept gold, silver, and precious clothing?"

Coming forward and stretching out his hand, Pilgrim took a handful of the money, saying, "Gao Cai, yesterday you took the trouble to bring my master here with the result that we made a disciple today. We've nothing to thank you with. Take this as remuneration for being a guide; perhaps you can use it to buy a few pairs of straw sandals. If there're any more monsters, turn them over to me and I'll truly be grateful to you."

Gao Cai took the money and respected to thank Pilgrim for his reward. Old Mr. Gao then said, "If the masters don't want the silver and gold, please accept at least these three simple garments that're but small tokens of our goodwill."

"If those of us who've left the family," said Tripitaka again, "accept the bribe of a single strand of silk, we may fall into ten thousand kalpas from which we may never recover. It's quite sufficient that we take along the leftovers from the table as provisions on our way."

8 Rules spoke up from the side: "Master, Elder Brother, you may not want these things. But I was a son-in-law in this household for several years and the payment for my services should be worth more than three stones of rice! Dad, my shirt's torn by Elder Brother last night; please give me a cassock of blue silk. My shoes are worn also so please give me a good pair of new shoes."

When old Mr. Gao heard that, he dared not refuse; a new pair of shoes and a cassock were purchased at once so that 8 Rules could dispose of the old attire. Swaggering around, our 8 Rules spoke amiably to old Mr. Gao, saying, “Please convey my humble sentiments to my mum-in-law, great-aunt, second aunt, uncle-in-law, and all other relatives. Today I’m going away as a monk and please don’t blame me if I can’t take leave of them in person. Dad, do take care of my better half. If we fail in our quest for scriptures, I’ll return to secular life and live with you again as your son-in-law.”

“Coolie!” shouted Pilgrim. “Stop babbling nonsense!”

“It’s not nonsense,” said 8 Rules. “Sometimes I fear that things may go wrong and then I’d end up unable either to be a monk or to take a wife, losing out on both counts.”

“Less of this idle conversation!” said Tripitaka. “We must hurry up and leave.” They packed their luggage, and 8 Rules was told to carry the load with a pole. Tripitaka rode on the white horse while Pilgrim led the way with the iron rod across his shoulders. The three of them took leave of old Mr. Gao and his relatives and headed toward the West. A poem as testimony says:

*The earth’s mist-shrouded, the trees appear tall. A god-son of Tang court ever toils.  
He eats in need rice begged from many homes; wears when cold a robe patched 1000-fold.  
Holdfast at the breast the Horse of the Will! The Mind-Monkey is sly – let him not wail!  
Nature 1 with feelings causes all joined<sup>24</sup> – the moon’s full of gold light when hair’s shorn.<sup>25</sup>*

The 3 of them proceeded toward the West, and for about a month it was an uneventful journey. When they crossed the boundary of Qoco, they looked up and saw a tall mountain. Tripitaka reined in his horse and said, “Wukong, Aware of Ability, there’s a tall mountain ahead. We must approach it with care.”

“It’s nothing!” said 8 Rules. “This mountain’s called the Pagoda Mountain and a Crow’s Nest Chan Master lives there, practicing austerities. Old bull’s met him before.”

“What’s his business?” said Tripitaka.

“He’s fairly accomplished in the Way,” said 8 Rules, “and once asked me to practice austerities with him. But I didn’t go and that’s the end of the matter.” As master and disciple conversed, they soon arrived at the mountain. *What a splendid mountain! See south of it, blue pines, jade-green junipers; north of it, green willows, red peach trees. A clamorous din: the mountain fowls are conversing. A fluttering exercise: mortal cranes unite in flying. A dense fragrance: the flowers in 1000 colours. A manifold green: diverse plants in forms exotic. In the stream green water flows bubbling; before the cliff float petals of hallowed cloud. Truly a place of rare beauty, a well-secluded spot; silence is all, not a man to be seen.* As the master sat on his horse, peering into the distance, he saw on top of the fragrant juniper tree a nest made of dried wood and grass. To the left, musk deer carried flowers in their mouths; to the right, mountain monkeys were presenting fruits. At the top of the tree, blue and pink phoenixes recited together, soon to be joined by a congregation of black cranes and brightly coloured pheasants. “Isn’t that the Crow’s Nest Chan Master?” asked 8 Rules, pointing.

Tripitaka urged on his horse and rode up to the tree. That Chan Master who seeing the 3 of them approach, left his nest and jumped down from the tree. Tripitaka dismounted and saluted himself.

Raising him up with his hand, the Chan Master said, “Holy Monk, please arise! Pardon me for not coming to meet you.”

“Old Chan Master,” said 8 Rules, “please receive my salute!”

“Aren’t you the Bullseye Ganglie of the Fulling Mountain?” asked the Chan Master, startled. “How did you’ve the good fortune to journey with the holy monk?”

“A few years back,” said 8 Rules, “I was beholden to the Nun Guanyin for persuading me to follow him as a disciple.”

“Good! Good! Good!” said the Chan Master, greatly pleased. Then he pointed to Pilgrim and asked, “Who’s this person?”

“How’s it that the old Chan recognises him,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “and not me?”

“Because I’ve not had the pleasure of meeting you,” said the Chan Master.

Tripitaka said, “He’s my eldest disciple, Sun Wukong.”

Smiling amiably, the Chan Master said, “How impolite of me!” Tripitaka saluted again and asked about the distance to the Great Thunderclap Temple of the Western Heaven. “It’s very far away! Very far away!” said the Chan Master. “What’s more, the road’s a difficult one filled with tigers and leopards.”

With great earnestness, Tripitaka asked again, “Just how it’s far?”

“Though it may be very far,” answered the Chan Master, “you’ll arrive there one day. But all those *killing* hindrances along the way are hard to dispel. I’ve a Heart *Thread* here in this scroll; it’s fifty-four sentences containing two hundred and seventy characters. When you meet these *killing* hindrances, recite the *Thread* and you’ll not suffer any injury or harm.” Tripitaka saluted himself on the ground and begged to receive it whereupon the Chan Master imparted the *Thread* by reciting it orally. The *Thread* said: “The Heart *Thread* of the Great Perfection of Wisdom.” When the Nun Guanyin the On-Looking Lord was moving in the deep course of the Perfection of Wisdom, she saw that the 5 heaps were but emptiness and transcended all sufferings. Son of Sari, form is no different from emptiness, emptiness no different from form; form is emptiness, and emptiness is form. Of sensations, perceptions, volition, and consciousness, the same is also true. Son of Sari, it is thus that all religions are but empty appearances, neither produced nor destroyed, neither defiled nor pure, neither increasing nor decreasing. This is why in emptiness there are no forms and no sensations, perceptions, volition, or consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or object of mind. There is no realm of sight [and so forth], until we reach the realm of no mind-consciousness; there is no ignorance, nor is there extinction of ignorance [and so forth], until we reach the stage where there is no old age and death, nor is there the extinction of old age and death; there is no suffering, annihilation, or way; there is no cognition or attainment. Because there is nothing to be attained, the mind of the Nun, by virtue of reliance upon the Perfection of Wisdom, has no hindrances: no hindrances, and therefore, no terror or fear; he is far removed from error and delusion, and finally reaches Extinguishment. All the gods of the 3 worlds rely on the Perfection of Wisdom and that is why they attain the ultimate and complete enlightenment. Know therefore that the Perfection of Wisdom is a great divine spell, a spell of great illumination, a spell without superior, and a spell without equal. It can do away with all sufferings – such is the unvarnished truth. Therefore, when the Spell of the Perfection of Wisdom is to be spoken, say this spell: “Gone, gone, gone beyond, completely gone beyond! O what an awakening! All hail!” Now because that master of the law from the Tang court was spiritually prepared, he could remember the Heart *Thread* after hearing it only once. Through him, it has come down to us this day. It is the comprehensive classic for the cultivation of Perfection, the very gateway to becoming a god. After the transmission of the *Thread*, the Chan Master trod on the cloudy luminosity and was about to return to his crow’s nest. Tripitaka however, held him back and earnestly questioned him again about the condition of the road to the West. The Chan Master laughed and said: *“The way isn’t too hard to walk; try listening to what I say. A thousand hills and waters deep; places full of goblins and snags; when you reach those sky-touching cliffs, fear not and put your mind at rest. Crossing the Rub Ear Precipice, you must walk with steps placed sideways. Take care in the Black Pine Forest; fox-spirits will likely bar your way. Griffins will fill the capitals; monsters all mountains populate; old tigers sit as magistrates; greying wolves act as registrars. Lions, elephants – all called kings! Leopards, tigers are coachmen all! A wild goat totes a hauling pole; you’ll meet ahead a water sprite. An old stone ape of many years now nurses over there his spite! Just ask that acquaintance of yours: well he knows the way to the West.”*

Hearing this, Pilgrim laughed with scorn and said, “Let’s go. Don’t ask him, ask me! That’s enough!”

Tripitaka did not perceive what he meant. The Chan Master, changing into a beam of golden light, went straight up to his crow’s nest while the priest saluted toward him to express his gratitude. Enraged, Pilgrim lifted his iron rod and thrust it upward violently but garlands of blooming lotus flowers were seen together with a thousand-layered shield of auspicious clouds. Though Pilgrim might have the strength to overturn rivers and seas, he could not catch hold of even one strand of the crow’s nest. When Tripitaka saw this, he pulled Pilgrim back saying, “Wukong, why’re you jabbing at the nest of a Nun like him?”

“For leaving like that after abusing both my brother and me,” said Pilgrim.

“He’s speaking of the way to the Western Heaven,” said Tripitaka. “Since when did he abuse you?”

“Didn’t you get it?” asked Pilgrim.

“He said, ‘A wild goat totes a hauling pole,’ and insulted 8 Rules. ‘An old stone ape of many years’ ridiculed old monkey. How else you’d explain that?”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “don’t be angry. This Chan Master does know the events of past and future. Let’s see if his statement, ‘You’ll meet ahead a water sprite,’ will be fulfilled or not. Let’s spare him and leave.” Pilgrim saw the lotus flowers and auspicious fog near the nest, and he had little alternative than to ask his master to mount so that they could descend from the mountain and proceed toward the West. Lo, their journey *thus shows that in man’s world pure leisure is rare but evils and ogres are rife in the hills!*

## 020

### At Yellow Wind Ridge the Tang Monk meets adversity; in mid-mountain, 8 Rules strives to be 1<sup>st</sup>

*The religion’s born through the mind; it’ll be destroyed, too, through the mind.*

*By whom it’s destroyed or born that you must determine yourself.*

*If it’s through your own mind, why do others need to tell you?*

*All that you need is your hard work to draw blood out of iron ore.*

*Let a silk cord puncture your nose to tie a firm knot on the void; fasten that to the no-work tree<sup>1</sup> that you’d not be vicious and wild.*

*Regard not the thief as your son and forget all religion and mind.*

*Let not the other deceive me: with 1 big punch strike him out first.*

*The manifest mind’s also no mind; manifest Law is law that’s stopped.*

*When both Bull<sup>2</sup> and Man disappear, the jade-green sky is bright and clear.*

*Any autumn moon’s just as round: you can’t tell 1 from the other.*

This enigmatic *verse* was composed by Xuanzang, master of the law, after he had thoroughly mastered the *Heart Thread* that had in fact broken through the gate of his understanding. He recited it frequently, and the beam of spiritual light penetrated by itself to his innermost being. The three travellers who dined on the wind and rested by the waters who clothed themselves with the moon and cloaked themselves with the stars on their journey. Soon, it was the scene of summer again, beneath a torrid sky. They saw *flowers gone and butterflies cared not to linger; on tall trees the cicada chirp turned brazen. Wild worms made their cocoons, fair pomegranates their fire as new lilies in the ponds appeared.* <sup>3</sup>As they were travelling one day, it was growing late again when they saw a hamlet beside the mountain road. “Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “look at that sun setting behind the mountain hiding its fiery orb and the moon rising on the eastern sea, revealing an icy wheel. It’s a good thing that a family lives by the road up there. Let’s ask for lodging for the night and proceed tomorrow.”

“You’re right!” said 8 Rules. “Old bull’s rather hungry, too! Let’s go and beg for some food at the house. Then I can regain my strength to pole the luggage.”

“This family-hugging devil!” said Pilgrim. “You only left the family a few days ago, and you’re already beginning to complain.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “I’m not like you – I can’t imbibe the wind and exhale the mist. Since I began following our master a few days ago, I’ve been half hungry all the time. Did you know that?”

Hearing this, Tripitaka said, “Aware of Ability, if your heart still clings to the family, you’re not the kind of person who wants to leave it. You may as well turn back!” Idiot was so taken aback that he fell on his knees and said, “Master, please do not listen to the words of Elder Brother. He loves to put blame on others: I’ve not made any complaint but he said that I was complaining. I’m only an honest moron who said that I was hungry so that we’d find some household to beg for food. Immediately he called me a family-hugging devil! Master, I received the commandments from the Nun and mercy from you, and that was why I was determined to serve you and go to the Western Heaven. I vow that I’ve no regrets. This is in fact what they call the practice of strict austerities. What do you mean, I’m not willing to leave the family?”

“In that case,” said Tripitaka, “you may get up.”

Leaping up with a bound, Idiot was still muttering something as he picked up the pole with the luggage. He had no choice but to follow his companions with complete determination up to the door of the house by the wayside. Tripitaka dismounted, Pilgrim took the reins, and 8 Rules put down the luggage, all standing still beneath the shade of a large tree. Holding his nine-ringed priestly staff and pressing down his rain hat woven of straw and rattan, Tripitaka went to the door first. He saw inside an old man reclining on a bamboo bed and softly reciting the name of God. Tripitaka dared not speak loudly; instead, he said very slowly and quietly, “Patron, salutations!” The old man jumped up and at once began to straighten out his attire. He walked out of the door to return the greeting, saying, “Honoured Priest, pardon me for not coming to meet you. Where did you come from? What are you doing at my humble abode?”

“This poor monk,” said Tripitaka, “happens to be a priest from the Great Tang in the Land of the East. In obedience to an imperial decree, I’m journeying to the Great Thunderclap Temple to seek scriptures from a god. It was getting late when I arrived in your esteemed region, and I’d beg for shelter for one night in your fine mansion. I beseech you to grant me this favour.”

“You can’t go there,” said the old man, shaking his head and waving his hand, “it’s exceedingly difficult to bring scriptures back from the Western Heaven. If you want to do that, you might as well go the Eastern Heaven!” Tripitaka fell silent, thinking to himself, “The Nun clearly told me to go to the West. Why does this old man now say that I’d head for the East instead? Where in the East would there be any scriptures?” Terribly flustered and embarrassed, he could not make any reply for a long time.

We now tell you about Pilgrim who had always been impulsive and mischievous. Unable to restrain himself, he went forward and said in a loud voice, “Old man! Though you’re of such great age, you don’t have much common sense. We monks have travelled a great distance to come and ask you for shelter, and here you’re trying to intimidate us with discouraging words. If your house is too small and there’s not enough space for us to sleep, we’ll sit beneath the trees for the night and not disturb you.”

“Master!” said the old man, taking hold of Tripitaka, “you don’t say anything. But that disciple of yours with a pointed chin, shrivelled cheeks, a thunder-god mouth, and blood-red eyes – he looks like a demon with a bad case of consumption – how dare he offend an aged person like me!”

“An old fellow like you,” said Pilgrim with a laugh, “really has very little discernment! Those who are handsome may be good for their looks only! A person like me, old monkey, may be small but tough, like the skin around a ball of ligaments!”

“I suppose you must have some abilities,” said the old man. “I’ll not boast,” said Pilgrim, “but they are passable.”

“Where did you used to live?” asked the old man, “and why did you shave your hair to become a monk?”

“The ancestral home of old monkey,” said Pilgrim, “is at the Water-Curtain Cave in the Flower-Fruit Mountain, in the Aolai Country of the East East-Videha Continent. I learned to be a monster-spirit in my youth, assuming the name of Wukong, and with my abilities I finally became the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. Because I didn’t receive any acceptable appointment in Heaven, I caused great turmoil in the Celestial Palace, and incurred great calamities for myself. I was however, delivered from my ordeals and have turned to Religion instead to seek the fruits of Truth. As a guardian of my master who is in the service of the Tang court, I’m journeying to the Western Heaven to worship God. Why should I fear tall mountains, treacherous roads, wide waters, and wild waves? I, old monkey, can apprehend monsters, subdue demons, tame tigers, capture dragons – in sum, I know a little about all the matters that a person needs to know to go up to Heaven or to descend into Earth. If by chance your household is suffering from some such disturbances as flying bricks and dancing tiles, or talking pots and doors opening by themselves, old monkey can quiet things down for you.”

When that old man heard this lengthy speech, he roared with laughter and said, “So you’re really a garrulous monk who begs for alms from place to place!”

“Only your son is garrulous!” said Pilgrim. “I’m not very talkative these days, because following my master on his journey is quite tiring.”

“If you’re not tired,” said that old man, “and if you’re in the mood to chatter, you’d probably talk me to death! Since you’ve such abilities, I suppose you can go to the West successfully. How many of you’re there? You may rest in my thatched hut.”

“We thank the old patron for not sending us away,” said Tripitaka; “there are three of us altogether.”

“Where is the third member of your party?” asked the old man. “Your eyes must be somewhat dim, old man,” said Pilgrim. “Isn’t he over there standing in the shade?” The old man did indeed have poor sight; he raised his head and stared intently. The moment he saw 8 Rules with his strange face and mouth, he became so terrified that he started to rush back into the house, tripping at every step. “Shut the door! Shut the door!” he cried. “A monster is coming!” Pilgrim caught hold of him, saying, “Don’t be afraid, old man! He’s no monster; he’s my younger brother.”

“Fine! Fine! Fine!” said the old man, shaking all over. “One monk uglier than another!”

8 Rules approached him and said, “You’re really mistaken. Aged Sir, if you judge people by their looks. We may be ugly but we’re all useful.” As the old man was speaking with the three monks in front of his house, two young men appeared to the south of the village, leading an old woman and several young children. All of them had their clothes rolled up and were walking barefoot, for they were returning after a day’s planting of young shoots of grain. When they saw the white horse, the luggage, and the goings-on in front of their house, they all ran forward, asking, “What are you people doing here?” Turning his head, 8 Rules flapped his ears a couple of times and stuck out his long horn once, so frightening the people that they fell down right and left, madly scattering in every direction. Tripitaka, alarmed, kept saying, “Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid! We’re not bad people! We’re monks in quest of scriptures.” Coming out of his house, the old man helped the old woman up, saying, “Mama, get up! Calm yourself. This master came from the Tang court. His disciples may look hideous but they are really good people with ugly faces. Take the boys and girls back into the house.” Clutching at the old man, the old woman walked inside with the two young men and their children.

Sitting on the bamboo bed in their house, Tripitaka began to protest, saying, “Disciples! The two of you’re not only ugly in appearance but you’re also rude in your language. You’ve scared this family badly, and you’re causing me to sin.”

“To tell you the truth, Master,” said 8 Rules, “since I started accompanying you, I’ve become a lot better behaved. At the time when I was living in Old Gao Village, all I needed to do was to pout and flap my ears once, and scores of people would be frightened to death!”

“Stop talking rubbish, Idiot,” said Pilgrim, “and fix your ugliness.”

“Look at the way Wukong talks,” said Tripitaka. “Your appearance comes with your birth. How can you tell him to fix it?”

“Take that rake-like horn,” said Pilgrim, “put it in your bosom, and don’t take it out. And stick your rush-leaf-fan ears to the back of your head, and don’t shake them. That’s fixing it.” 8 Rules did indeed hide his horn and stick his ears to the back of his head; with his hands folded in front of him to hide his head, he stood on one side of his master. Pilgrim took the luggage inside the main door, and tied the white horse to one of the posts in the courtyard.

The old man then brought a young man in to present three cups of tea placed on a wooden tray. After the tea, he ordered a vegetarian meal to be prepared. Then the young man took an old, unvarnished table full of holes and several stools with broken legs, and placed them in the courtyard for the three of them to sit where it was cool. Only then did Tripitaka ask, “Old patron, what is your noble surname?”

“Your humble servant goes by the surname of Wang,” said the old man. “And how many heirs do you’ve?” asked Tripitaka. “I’ve two sons and three grandchildren,” said the old man. “Congratulations! Congratulations!” said Tripitaka. “And what is your age?”

“I’ve foolishly lived till my sixty-first year,” the old man said.

“Good! Good! Good!” said Pilgrim. “You’ve just begun a new sexagenarian cycle.”

“Old patron,” said Tripitaka again, “you said when we first came that the scriptures in the Western Heaven were difficult to get. Why?”

“The scriptures are not hard to get,” said the old man, “but the journey there is filled with hazards and difficulties. Some thirty miles west of us there is a mountain called the Yellow Wind Ridge of Eight Hundred Miles. Monsters infest that mountain, and that’s what I meant by difficulties. Since this little priest claims that he has many abilities however, you may perhaps proceed after all.”

“No fear! No fear!” said Pilgrim. “With old monkey and his younger brother around, we’ll never be touched, no matter what kind of monster we meet.”

While they spoke, 1 of the sons brought out some rice and placed it on the table, saying, “Please eat.”

Tripitaka immediately folded his hands to begin his grace but 8 Rules had already swallowed a whole bowl of rice. Before the priest could say the few sentences, Idiot had devoured 3 more bowlfuls. “Look at the glutton!” said Pilgrim. “It’s like we’ve met a *deceased*!” Old Wang was a sensitive person. When he saw how fast 8 Rules was eating, he said, “This honoured priest must be really hungry! Quick, bring more rice!” Idiot in truth had an enormous appetite. Look at him! Without lifting his head once, he finished over ten bowls while Tripitaka and Pilgrim could hardly finish two. Idiot refused to stop and wanted to eat still more. “In our haste we’ve not prepared any dainty viands,” said old Wang, “and I dare not press you too much. Please take at least one more helping.” Both Tripitaka and Pilgrim said, “We’ve had enough.”

“Old man,” said 8 Rules, “what are you mumbling about? Who’s having a game of divination with you? Why mention all that about the fifth *yao* and the sixth *yao*?<sup>4</sup> If you’ve rice, just bring more of it, that’s all!” So Idiot in one meal finished all the rice in that household, and then he said he was only half full! The tables and dishes were cleared away, and after bedding had been placed on the bamboo bed and on some wooden boards, the travellers rested.

The next morning, Pilgrim went to saddle the horse while 8 Rules put their luggage in order. Old Wang asked his wife to prepare some refreshments and drinks to serve them, after which the three of them expressed their thanks and took leave of their host. The old man said, “If there is any mishap on your journey after you leave here, you must feel free to return to our house.”

“Old man,” said Pilgrim, “don’t speak such disconcerting words. Those of us who’ve left the family never retrace our steps!”

They then urged on the horse, picked up the luggage, and proceeded toward the West. *Alas!* What this journey means for them is that *there’s no safe way which leads to the Western Realm; there will be great disasters brought by demons vile*. Before the 3 of them had travelled for half a day, they did indeed come upon a tall mountain, exceedingly rugged. Tripitaka rode right up to the hanging cliff and looked around, sitting sideways on his saddle. *Truly tall was the mountain; rugged, the peak; steep, the precipice; deep, the canyon; gurgling, the stream; and fresh were the flowers. This mountain whether tall or not, its top reached the blue sky; this stream, whether deep or not, its floor opened to Hell below. Before the mountain, white clouds rose in continuous rings and boulders in shapes grotesque. Countless the soul-rending cliffs ten thousand yards deep; behind them, winding, twisting, dragon-hiding caves where water dripped from ledges drop by drop. He also saw some deer with zigzag horns; dull and dumbly staring antelopes; winding and coiling red-scaled pythons; silly and foolish white-faced apes; tigers that climbed the hills to seek their dens at night; dragons that churned the waves to leave their lairs at dawn. If one stepped before a cave’s entrance, the dead leaves crackled; the fowls in the grass darted up with wings loudly beating; the beasts in the forest walked with paws noisily scratching; suddenly wild creatures hurried by, making hearts beat with fear. Thus it was that the Due-to-Fall Cave duly faced the Due-to-Fall Cave, the Cave duly facing the Due-to-Fall Cave duly faced the mount. 1 blue bill dyed like 1000 yards of jade, mist-veiled like countless mounds of jade-green gauze.* The master rode forward very slowly while the Great Sage Sun also walked at a slower pace and Bullsseye Aware of Ability proceeded leisurely with the load. As all of them were looking at the mountain, a great whirlwind suddenly arose. Alarmed, Tripitaka said, “Wukong, the wind’s rising!”

“Why fear the wind?” said Pilgrim. “This is the breath of Heaven in the four seasons, nothing to be afraid of.”

“But this is a terribly violent wind, unlike the kind that comes from Heaven,” said Tripitaka.

“How so?” said Pilgrim.

Tripitaka said, “Look at this wind! *Augustly it blows in a blustering key, an immense force leaving the jade-green sky. It passes the ridge, just hear the trees roar. It moves in the wood, just see the poles quake. Willows by the banks are rocked to the roots; blown garden flowers now soar with their leaves. Fishing boats, nets drawn, make their hawsers taut; vessels with sails down have their anchors cast. Trekkers in mid-journey have lost their way; woodsmen in the hills cannot hold their loads. From woods with fruits divine the apes disperse; from clumps of rare flowers the small fawns flee. Before the cliff cypress fall one by one; downstream bamboo and pine die leaf by leaf. Earth and dust are scattered while sand explodes; rivers and seas overturned, waves churn and roll.*”

8 Rules went forward and tugged at Pilgrim, saying, “Elder Brother, the wind is too strong! Let’s find shelter until it dies down.”

“You’re too soft, Brother,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “when you want to hide the moment the wind gets strong. What would happen to you if you’re to meet a monster-spirit face to face?”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you’ve probably not heard of the proverb, *flee the fair gender like a foe; flee the wind like an arrow!* We suffer no loss if we take shelter just for a little while.”

“Stop talking,” said Pilgrim, “and let me seize the wind and smell it.”

“You’re fibbing again, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules with a laugh, “for how can the wind be seized for you to smell? Even if you manage to catch hold of it, it will slip past you at once.”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “you didn’t know that I’ve the magic to ‘seize the wind.’” Dear Great Sage! He allowed the head of the wind to move past but he caught hold of its tail and sniffed at it. Finding it somewhat fetid, he said, “This is indeed not a very good wind, for it smells like a tiger or else like a monster; there’s something definitely strange about it.”

Hardly had he finished speaking when from over a hump of the mountain a fierce striped tiger with a whip-like tail and powerful limbs appeared. Tripitaka was so horrified that he could no longer sit on the saddle; he fell head over heels from the white horse and lay beside the road, half out of his wits. Throwing down the luggage, 8 Rules took up his muckrake and rushed past Pilgrim. “Cursed beast!” he shouted. “Where’re you going?” He lunged forward and struck at the beast’s head. That tiger stood straight up on his hind legs and, raising his left paw, punctured his own breast with one jab. Then gripping the skin, he tore downward with a loud rending noise and he became completely stripped of his own hide as he stood there by the side of the road. *Look how abominable he appears! Oh!* That hideous form: *all smeared with blood, the naked body; most sickly red, the warped legs and feet; like shooting flames, wild hair by the temples; bristling hard, 2 eyebrows pointing upward; hellishly white, 4 steel-like fangs; a pair of gold eyes with light aglow; imposing of mien, he mightily roared; he cried aloud with power fierce.* “Slow down! Slow down!” he shouted. “I’m no other person. I’m the vanguard of the forces commanded by the Great King Yellow Wind. I’ve received the Great King’s strict order to patrol this mountain and to catch a few mortals to be used as hors d’oeuvres for him.

Where did you monks come from that you dare reach for your weapons to harm me?”

“Cursed beast that you’re!” cried 8 Rules. “So you don’t recognise me! We’re no mortals who just happen to be passing by; we’re the disciples of Tripitaka, the royal brother of the Great Tang Emperor in the Land of the East who by imperial decree’s journeying to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from a god. You better stand aside quickly for us to pass and don’t alarm my master. Then I’ll spare your life. But if you’re impudent as before, there’ll be no clemency when this rake’s lifted up!”

That monster-spirit would not permit any further discussion. He quickly drew near, assumed a fighting pose, and clawed at 8 Rules’ face. Dodging the blow, 8 Rules struck at once with his rake. Since the monster had no weapons in his hands, he turned and fled with 8 Rules hard on his heels. Racing to the slope below, the monster took out from beneath a clump of rocks a pair of bronze scimitars with which he turned to face his pursuer. So the 2 of them clashed right in front of the mountain slope, closing in repeatedly. Meanwhile, Pilgrim lifted up the Tang Monk and said, “Master, don’t be afraid. Sit here and let old monkey go help 8 Rules strike down that monster so that we can leave.” Only then did Tripitaka manage to sit up; trembling all over, he began to recite the *Heart Thread*. Whipping out the iron rod, Pilgrim shouted, “Catch him!” 8 Rules at once attacked with even greater ferocity, and the monster fled in defeat. “Don’t spare him,” yelled Pilgrim. “We must catch him!”



Wielding rod and rake, the 2 of them gave chase down the mountain. In panic, the monster resorted to the trick of the gold cicada casting its shell: he rolled on the ground and changed back into the form of a tiger. Pilgrim and 8 Rules would not let up. Closing in on the tiger, they intended to dispose of him once and for all. When the monster saw them approaching, he again stripped himself of his own hide and threw the skin over a large piece of rock while his true form changed into a violent gust of wind heading back the way he had come. Suddenly noticing the master of the law sitting by the road and reciting the *Heart Thread*, he caught hold of him and hauled him away by mounting the wind. O, pity that Tripitaka, *the River Float fated to suffer off! It's hard to make merit in God's gate!* Having taken the Tang Monk back to the door of his cave, the monster stopped the wind and said to the 1 standing guard at the door, "Go report to the Great King and say that the Tiger Vanguard has captured a monk. He awaits his order outside the door." The Cave Master gave the order for him to enter. The Tiger Vanguard with the two bronze scimitars hanging from his waist, lifted up the Tang Monk in his hands. He went forward and knelt down, saying, "Great King! Though your humble officer is not talented, he thanks you for granting him the honoured command of doing patrol in the mountain. I encountered a monk who is Tripitaka, master of the law and brother to the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East. While he was on his way to seek scriptures from God, I captured him to present to you here for your culinary pleasure." When the Cave Master heard this, he was a little startled. "I've heard some rumour," he said, "that the master of the law Tripitaka's a divine monk who is going in search of scriptures by imperial decree of the Great Tang. He has under him a disciple whose name is Pilgrim Sun and who possesses tremendous magical power and prodigious intelligence. How did you manage to catch him and bring him here?"

"He has in fact two disciples," said the Vanguard. "The one who appeared first used a nine-pronged muckrake, and he had a long horn and huge ears. Another one used a golden-hooped iron rod, and he had fiery eyes and diamond pupils. As they were chasing me to attack me, I used the trick of the gold cicada casting its shell and succeeded not only in eluding them but also in catching this monk. I now respectfully present him to the Great King as a meal."

"Let's not eat him yet," said the Cave Master.

"Great King," said the Vanguard, "only a worthless horse turns away ready feed!"

"You've not considered this," said the Cave Master. "There's nothing wrong with eating him but I'm afraid his two disciples may come to our door and argue with us. Let's tie him instead to one of the posts in the rear garden and wait for three or four days. If those two don't show up to disturb us, then we can enjoy the double benefit of having his body cleaned and not having to bicker with our tongues. Then we can do what we want with him, whether we wish him boiled, steamed, fried, or sautéed; we can take our time to enjoy him." Highly pleased, the Vanguard said, "The Great King is full of wisdom and foresight, and what he says is most reasonable. Little ones, take the priest inside."

Seven or eight demons rushed up from the sides and took the Tang Monk away; like hawks catching sparrows, they bound him firmly with ropes. This is how that *ill-fated River Float on Pilgrim broods; a god-monk in pain calls Aware of Ability to mind*. "Disciples," he said, "I don't know in what mountain you're catching monsters or in what region you're subduing goblins. But I've been captured by this demon from whom I've to suffer great injury. When'll we see each other again? Oh, what misery! If you two can come here quickly, you may be able to save my life. But if you tarry, I'll never survive!" As he lamented and sighed, his tears fell like rain. Pilgrim and 8 Rules having chased the tiger down the slope of the mountain, saw him fall and collapse at the foot of the cliff. Lifting his rod, Pilgrim brought it down on the tiger with all his might but the rod bounced back up and his hands were stung by the impact. 8 Rules, too gave a blow with his muckrake, and its prongs also rebounded. They then discovered that it was nothing but a piece of tiger-skin covering a large slab of stone. Greatly startled, Pilgrim said, "Oh, no! Oh, no! He's tricked us!"

"What trick?" asked 8 Rules.

Pilgrim replied, "This is called the trick of the gold cicada casting its shell. He left his skin covering the stone here to fool us but he's himself escaped. Let's go back at once to take a look at Master. Let's hope that he's not been hurt." They retreated hurriedly but Tripitaka had long vanished. Bellowing like thunder, Pilgrim cried, "What'll we do? He's taken Master away."

"Heavens! Heavens!" wailed 8 Rules, leading the horse as tears fell from his eyes, "where'll we go to look for him?"

With head held high, Pilgrim said, "Don't cry! Don't cry! The moment you cry, you already feel defeated. They've to be somewhere in this mountain. Let's go and search for them."

The 2 of them indeed rushed up the mountain, passing the ridges and scaling the heights. After travelling for a long time, they suddenly beheld a cave dwelling emerging from beneath a cliff. Pausing to take a careful look around, they saw that it was indeed a formidable place. See a *pointed peak fortress-like; an old path ever winding; blue pines and fresh bamboos; green willows and verdant Wu-trees; "strange rocks in twos below the cliff, rare fowls in pairs within the woods. A stream flowing far away spills over a wall of stones; the mountain brook reaches the sandy banks in small drops. Was-teland clouds in clusters and grass as green as jade. The sly vixen and hare scamper wildly about; horned deer and musk deer lock to contest their strength. Slanted across the cliff dangles an aged vine; half down the gorge an ancient cedar hangs. August and grand, this place surpasses Flower Mount; "the falling blooms and chirping birds rival Mount-Tai's*. "Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim, "you may leave the luggage in the fold of the mountain where it will be protected from the wind. Then you can graze the horse nearby and you need not come out. Let old monkey go fight with him at his door. That monster has to be caught before our master can be rescued."

"No need for instructions," said 8 Rules. "Go quickly!" Pulling down his shirt and tightening his belt on the tiger-skin skirt, Pilgrim grasped his rod and rushed up to the cave where he saw six words in large letters above the door: "Yellow Wind Cave, Yellow Wind Peak." He at once poised himself for battle with legs apart and one foot slightly ahead of the other. Holding his rod high, he cried, "Monster! Send out my master at once, lest I overturn your den and level your dwelling!"

When the little demons heard this, every one of them was panic-stricken and ran inside to make the report, "Great King, disaster!" The Yellow Wind Monster who was sitting there, asked, "What's the matter?"

"Outside the cave door there's a monk with a thunder-god mouth and hairy face," said one of the little demons, "holding in his hands a huge, thick, iron rod and demanding the return of his master." Somewhat fearful, the Cave Master said to the Tiger Vanguard, "I asked you to patrol the mountain, and you'd merely have caught a few mountain buffalo, wild bull, fat deer, or wild goats. Why did you've to bring back a Tang Monk? Now we've provoked his disciple to come here to create all sorts of disturbance. What shall we do?"

"Don't be anxious, Great King," said the Vanguard, "and put your worries to rest. Though this junior officer is untalented, he is willing to lead fifty soldiers out there and bring in that so-called Pilgrim Sun as a condiment for your meal."

"In addition to the various officers here," said the Cave Master, "we've some seven hundred regulars. You may pick as many of them as you want. Only if that Pilgrim is caught will we be able to enjoy a piece of that monk's flesh with any comfort. And if that happens, I'm willing to become your bond brother. But I fear that if you can't catch him, you may even get hurt. You mustn't blame me then!"

"Relax! Relax! Let me go now!" said the Tiger Monster. He checked off the roll fifty of the toughest little demons who began beating drums and waving banners. He himself took up the two bronze scimitars and leaped out of the cave, crying with a loud voice, "Where did you come from, you monkey-monk, that you dare make such a racket here?! "You skin-flaying beast!" shouted Pilgrim. "You're the one who used that shell-casting trick to take away my master. Why do you question me instead? You better send out my master immediately, or I'll not spare your life."

"I took your master," said the Tiger Monster, "so that he'd be served to my Great King as meat for his rice. If you know what's good for you, get away from here. If not, I'll catch you too, and you'll be eaten along with him. It'll be like 'one free piece of merchandise with every purchase!'"

When he heard this, Pilgrim was filled with anger. With grinding teeth and fiery eyes all ablaze, he lifted his iron rod and yelled, "What great ability you've that you dare talk like that? Don't move! Watch this rod!" Wielding his scimitars swiftly, the Vanguard turned to meet him. It was truly some battle as the two of them let loose their power. *What a fight! That monster's truly a goose's egg but Wukong's a goose-egg stone no less! When bronze swords fight Handsome Monkey King, it's like eggs coming to strike at stones. How can sparrows quarrel with the phoenix? Dare pigeons oppose the eagles and hawks? The monster belches wind – the mount's filled with dust; Wukong spits out fog and clouds hide the sun. They fight for no more than 4 or 5 rounds; the Vanguard grows weak, having no strength left. He turns in defeat to flee for his life, hard pressed by Wukong who seeks his death*. Able to hold out no longer, the monster turned and fled. But since he had boasted in front of the Cave Master, he dared not go back to the cave; instead, he fled toward the mountain slope. Pilgrim, of course, would not let him go; holding his rod, he gave chase relentlessly, shouting and crying along the way. As they reached the fold of the mountain that formed a wind break, he happened to look up, and there was 8 Rules grazing the horse. Hearing all the shouts and clamour, 8 Rules turned around and saw that it was Pilgrim chasing a defeated Tiger Monster. Abandoning the horse, 8 Rules lifted his rake and approaching from one side brought it down hard on the monster's head. *Pity that Vanguard! He hoped to leap clear of the brown-rope net, not knowing he would meet the fisher's coop. A blow from Eight Rules' rake produced 9 holes from which fresh blood spurted out and the brains of the monster's whole head ran dry!* A poem as a testimony for 8 Rules says:

*Returning to True Teaching some years ago, he kept a chaste diet to realise the Real Void.  
To serve Tripitaka's his pious wish: this, a new Religious convert's first merit.*

Idiot put his foot on the monster's spine and brought down the rake on him once more. When Pilgrim saw that, he was very pleased, saying, "That's right, Brother! He was audacious enough to lead scores of little demons against me but he was defeated. Instead of fleeing back to the cave, he came here seeking death. It's a good thing you're here, or else he would have escaped again."

"Is he the one who took our master with the wind?" asked 8 Rules.

"Yes! Yes!" said Pilgrim.

"Did you ask him the whereabouts of our master?" said 8 Rules.

"This monster brought Master to the cave," said Pilgrim, "to be served to some blackguard of a Great King as meat for his rice. I was enraged, fought with him, and chased him here for you to finish him off. Brother, this is your merit! You can remain here guarding the horse, luggage, and let me drag this dead monster back to the mouth of the cave to provoke battle again. We must capture the old monster before we can rescue Master."

"You're right, Elder Brother," said 8 Rules. "Go, go now! If you beat that old monster, chase him here and let Old bull intercept and kill him." *Dear Pilgrim!* Holding the iron rod in 1 hand and dragging the dead tiger with the other, he went back to the mouth of the cave. So it was that *the religion-master met monsters in his ordeal; feeling and nature in peace wild demons subdued*.

021

The Vihārapālas' prepare lodging for the Great Sage; Lingji of Sumeru crushes the wind demon

Those 50 defeated little demons rushed into the cave carrying their broken drums and torn banners. "Great King," they cried, "the Tiger Vanguard's no match for the hairy-faced monk. That monk chased him down the eastern slope until the Vanguard disappeared."

When the old monster heard this, he was terribly upset. As he saluted his head in silent deliberation, another little demon who stood guard at the door came to report, "Great King, the Tiger Vanguard's beaten to death by the hairy-faced monk and dragged up to our door to provoke battle."

Hearing this, the old monster became even angrier. "This fellow doesn't know when to stop!" he said. "I've not eaten his master but he's killed our Vanguard instead. How insolent!" Whereupon he bellowed, "Bring me my armour. I've heard only rumours about this Pilgrim Sun and I'm going out there to find out what sort of monk he's really. Even if he's nine heads and eight tails, I'm going to take him in here to pay for the life of my Tiger Vanguard!" The little demons quickly brought out the armour. After having been properly buckled and laced, the old monster took a steel trident and leaped out of the cave, leading the rest of the demons. Standing in front of the door, the Great Sage watched the monster emerge with a truly aggressive appearance. Look how he is attired. See *gold helmet reflecting the sun; gold cuirass gleaming with light. A pheasant-tail tassel flies from the helmet; a light yellow silk robe topped by the cuirass, tied with a dragon-like sash of brilliant hues. His chestplate emits eye-dazzling light. His boots of suede are dyed by locust flowers. His embroidered kilt is decked with willow leaves. Holding a sharp trident in his hands, he seems almost the Erlang<sup>2</sup> Boy of old!*

When he had come out, the old monster shouted, "Who is Pilgrim Sun?"

With one foot on the carcass of the Tiger Monster and the compliant iron rod in his hands, Pilgrim replied: "Your Grandpa Sun's here! Send my master out!"

The old monster took a careful look and saw the diminutive figure of Pilgrim – less than four feet, in fact – and his sallow cheeks. He said with a laugh: "Too bad! Too bad! I thought you're some kind of invincible hero. But you're only a sickly ghost with nothing more than your skeleton left!"

"Child," said Pilgrim laughing, "how you lack perception! Your grandpa may be somewhat small in size but if you've the courage to hit me on the head with the handle of your trident, I'll grow six feet at once."

"Harden your head," said the monster, "and have a taste of my handle!" Great Sage was not in the least frightened. When the monster struck him once, he stretched his waist and at once grew more than 6 feet attaining the height of 10 feet altogether. The monster was so alarmed that he tried to use his trident to hold him down shouting, "Pilgrim Sun, how dare you stand at my door, displaying this paltry magic of body protection! Stop using tricks! Come up here and let's measure our real abilities!"

"My dear son," said Pilgrim with laughter, "the proverb says: *Mercy should be shown before the hand's raised!* Your grandpa's pretty heavy-handed and fears that you'll be unable to bear even a stroke of this rod!" Refusing to listen to any such discussion, the monster turned his trident around and stabbed at Pilgrim's chest. The Great Sage, of course, was not at all perturbed, for as the saying goes, the expert is never exercised. He raised his rod and using the movement of the *black dragon sweeping the ground* to parry the trident, struck at the monster's head. The 2 of them thus began a fierce battle before that Yellow Wind Cave: *the Monster King became enraged; the Great Sage released his might. The Monster King became enraged, wishing to seize Pilgrim to pay for his Vanguard. The Great Sage released his might to capture this spirit and to save the priest. The trident arrived, blocked by the rod; the rod went forth, met by the trident. This one, a mountain-ruling captain of his hosts.*

*That one, the Handsome Monkey King who defends the Law. At first they fought on the dusty earth; then each arose midway to the sky. The fine steel trident; pointed, sharp, and brilliant. The compliant rod: body black and yellow hoops. Stabbed by them, your soul goes back to darkness! Struck by them, you'll face King Yama! You must rely on quick arms and keen sight. You must have a tough frame and great strength. The 2 fought without regard for life or death; knowing not who will be safe or who will be hurt.* The old monster and the Great Sage fought for 30 rounds but neither could gain the upper hand. Pressing for a quick victory, Pilgrim decided to use the trick of *the body beyond the body*. He tore from himself a handful of hairs that he chewed to pieces in his mouth. Spitting them out, he cried, "Change!" They changed at once into more than 100 Pilgrims: all having the same appearance and all holding an iron rod, they surrounded the monster in mid-air. Somewhat alarmed, the monster also resorted to his special talent. He turned to face the ground to the southwest and opened his mouth three times to blow out some air. Suddenly a mighty yellow wind arose in the sky. Dear wind! It was indeed powerful. *Cold and whistling, it changed Heaven and Earth as yellow sand whirled without form or shape. It cut through woods and hills to break pines and plums; it tossed up dirt and dust, cracking crags and cliffs. Waves churned in Yellow River to cloud its floor; tide and current swelled up at River Xiang. The Polestar Palace in the blue sky shook; the Hall of Darkness was almost blown down; the 500 Arhats all yelled and screamed; the 8 Guards of Akṣobhya all cried and shrieked. The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness's green-haired lion ran away; Auspicious-World lost his white elephant. <sup>3</sup>Snake and turtle of Zhenwu left their fold; <sup>4</sup>aflutter were the saddle-flaps of Zitong's<sup>5</sup> mule. Travelling merchants sent their cries to Heaven and boatmen saluted to make their many vows – their mist-like lives awash in rolling waves; names, fortunes adrift in the tide! Caves on Genie Mountains were black as pitch; the isle of Pengla® was gloomy and dark. Laozi'd not tend his elixir oven; Age Star folded his fan of grapevine leaves. As Queen Mum went to the Peaches Feast, the wind blew her skirt and pins awry. Erlang lost his way to the Guangzhou town; Naṭa found it hard to pull out his sword. Li Jing missed the pagoda in his hand; Lu Ban' dropped his golden-headed drill. While three stories of Thunderclap fell down, the stone bridge at Zhao-Zhou broke in twain. The orb of the red sun had little light; the stars of all Heaven grew obscure and faint. Birds of south mountains flew to northern hills; water of east lakes spilled over to the west. Fowls with mates broke up, they ceased their calls; mums and sons parted, their cries turned mute. Dragon Kings sought Nature spirits all over the sea; thunder gods hunted lightning everywhere. Ten Kings of Yama tried to find their judge; in Hell, Bull-Head ran after Horse-Face. This wind blew down the Potalaka Mount and whipped up one scroll of Guanyin's verse. White lotus-blooms, cut down, flew beside the sea; 12 halls of the Nun were blown down. From Pan Gu till this time since wind was known, there never was wind with such ferocity. Hu-la-la! The universe did almost split apart! The whole world was one mighty trembling mass!*

This violent wind called up by the monster blew away all those little Pilgrims formed by the Great Sage's hairs and sent them reeling through the air like so many spinning wheels. Unable even to wield their rods, how could they possibly hope to draw near to fight? Pilgrim was so alarmed that he shook his body and retrieved his hairs. He then lifted the iron rod and tried to attack the monster all by himself, only to be met by a mouthful of yellow wind right on his face. Those two fiery eyes with diamond pupils of his were so blasted that they shut tightly and could not be opened. No longer able to use his rod, he fled in defeat while the monster retrieved the wind that we'll mention no further. Bullseye 8 Rules led the horse and took the luggage to the fold of the mountain when he saw the violent yellow windstorm arriving and the whole of Heaven and Earth growing dim. There he crouched on the ground and refused to open his eyes or raise his head, his mouth incessantly calling on the name of God and making vows. As he was wondering how Pilgrim was faring in his battle and whether his master was dead or alive, the wind stopped and the sky brightened again. He looked up and peered toward the entrance of the cave but he could neither see any movement of weapons nor hear the sound of gongs and drums. Idiot dared not approach the cave, since there was no one else to guard the horse and the luggage. Deeply distressed and not knowing what to do, he suddenly heard the Great Sage approaching from the west, grunting and snorting as he came. Saluting to meet his companion, he said, "Elder Brother, what a mighty wind! Where did you come from?"

With a wave of his hand, Pilgrim said, "Formidable! It's truly formidable! Since I, old monkey, was born, I've never witnessed such a violent wind! That old monster fought me with a steel trident, and we battled for over thirty rounds. It was then that I used the magic of the body beyond the body and had him surrounded. He panicked and called up this wind that was ferocious indeed. Its force was so overwhelming that I'd to suspend my operation and flee instead. Whew! What a wind! Whew! What a wind! Old monkey also knows how to call up the wind and how to summon the rain but it's hardly as vicious as the wind of this monster-spirit!"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "how is the martial technique of that monster?"

"It's presentable," said Pilgrim, "and he knows how to use the trident! He is in fact just about the equal of old monkey. But that wind of his is vicious, and that makes it difficult to defeat him."

"In that case," said 8 Rules, "how are we going to rescue Master?"

Pilgrim said, "We'll have to wait to rescue Master. I wonder if there is any eye doctor around here who can take a look at my eyes."

"What's the matter with your eyes?" asked 8 Rules. Pilgrim replied, "That monster blew a mouthful of wind on my face, and my eyes were so sorely blasted that they are now watering constantly."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "we're in the middle of a mountain, and it's getting late. Let's not talk about eye doctors; we don't even have a place to stay."

"It won't be difficult to find lodging," said Pilgrim. "I doubt that the monster has the gall to harm our master. Let's find our way back to the main road and see whether we can stay with a family. After spending the night, we can return to subdue the monster tomorrow when it's light."

"Exactly, exactly," agreed 8 Rules.

Leading the horse and carrying up the luggage, they left the fold of the mountain and went up the road. Dusk was setting in, and as they walked, they heard the sound of barking dogs toward the south of the mountain slope. Stopping to look, they saw a small cottage with flickering lamplights. Not bothering to look for a path, the two of them walked through the grass and arrived at the door of that household. They saw *dark clumps of purplish fungi; greyish piles of white stones; dark clumps of purplish fungi with much green grass; greyish piles of white stones half grown with moss: a few specks of fireflies, their faint light aglow; a forest of wild woods stand in dense rows; orchids ever fragrant; bamboos newly planted; a clear stream flows a winding course; old cedars lean over a deep cliff. A secluded place where no travellers come: only wild flowers bloom before the door.* Not daring to enter without permission, they both called out: "Open the door! Open the door!"

An old man inside appeared with several young farmers, all holding rakes, pitchforks, and brooms. "Who're you? Who're you?" they asked.

With a salute, Pilgrim said, "We're disciples of a holy monk from the Great Tang in the Land of the East. We're on our way to seek scriptures from a god in the Western Heaven when we passed through this mountain, and our master was captured by the Yellow Wind Great King. We've yet to rescue him. Since it is getting late, we've come to ask for lodging for one night at your house. We beg you for this means of convenience." Returning the salute, the old man said, "Pardon me for not coming to greet you. This is a place where clouds are more numerous than people, and when we heard you calling at the door just now, we're afraid that it might be someone like a wily fox, a tiger, or a bandit from the mountain. That's why my little ones might have offended you by their rather brusque manner. Please come in. Please come in."

The two brothers led the horse and hauled the luggage inside; after tying up the animal and putting down the load, they exchanged greetings again with the old man of the cottage before taking their seats. An old manservant then came forward to present tea, after which several bowls of sesame seed rice were brought out.<sup>8</sup> After they had finished the rice, the old man asked for bedding to be laid out for them to sleep. Pilgrim said, "We don't need to sleep just yet. May I ask the good man whether there is in your region someone who sells eye medicine?"

"Which one of you elders has eye disease?" asked the old man. Pilgrim said, "To tell you the truth, Venerable Sir, we who have left the family rarely become ill. In fact, I've never known any disease of the eye."

"If you're not suffering from an eye disease," said the old man, "why do you want medicine?"

"We're trying to rescue our master at the entrance of the Yellow Wind Cave today," said Pilgrim. "Unexpectedly that monster blew a mouthful of wind at me, causing my eyes to hurt and smart. At the moment, I'm weeping constantly, and that's why I want to find eye medicine."

"My goodness! My goodness!" said the old man. "A young priest like you, why do you lie? The wind of that Great King Yellow Wind is most fearsome, not comparable with any spring-autumn wind, pine-and-bamboo wind, or the wind coming from the four quarters."

"I suppose," said 8 Rules, "it must be brain-bursting wind, goat-ear wind, leprous wind, or migraine-wind!"

"No, no!" said the old man. "His is called the Divine Wind of Fixity."

"What's it like?" asked Pilgrim.

The old man said, "That wind *can blow to dim Heaven and Earth and sadden both ghosts and gods. So savage it breaks rocks and stones, a man will die when he's blown!* If you'd encountered that wind of his, you think you'd still be alive? Only if you're a mortal you'd remain unharmed."

"Indeed!" said Pilgrim. "I may not be a mortal (for they belong to the younger generation as far as I'm concerned) but it'll take some doing to finish me off! That wind however, did cause my eyeballs to hurt and smart."

"If you can say that," said the old man, "you must be a person with some background. Our humble region has no one who sells eye medicine. But I myself suffer from watery eyes when the wind blows in my face, and I met an extraordinary person once who gave me a prescription. It's called the three-flower and nine-seed ointment capable of curing all wind-induced eye maladies." When Pilgrim heard these words, he saluted his head and said humbly, "I'm willing to ask you for some and try it on myself." The old man consented and went into the inner chamber. He took out a little cornelian vase and pulled off the stopper; using a small jade pin to scoop out some ointment, he dabbed it onto Pilgrim's eyes, telling him to close his eyes and rest quietly, for he would be well by morning. After doing this, the old man took the vase and retired with his attendants. 8 Rules untied the bags, took out the bedding, and asked Pilgrim to lie down. As Pilgrim groped about confusedly with his eyes closed, 8 Rules laughed and said, "Sir where's your seeing-eye cane?"

"You overstuffed idiot!" said Pilgrim. "You want to take care of me as a blind man?"

Giggling to himself, Idiot fell asleep but Pilgrim sat on the mattress and did exercises to cultivate his magic power. Only after the third watch did he sleep. Soon it was the fifth watch and dawn was about to break. Wiping his face, Pilgrim opened his eyes, saying, "It's really marvellous medicine! I can see a hundred times better than before!" He then turned his head to look around. Ah! There were neither buildings nor halls, only some old locust trees and tall willows. The brothers were actually lying on a green grass meadow. Just then, 8 Rules began to stir, saying, "Elder Brother, why are you making all these noises?"

"Open your eyes and take a look," said Pilgrim. Raising his head, Idiot discovered that the house had disappeared. He was so startled that he scrambled up at once, crying, "Where's my horse?"

"Isn't it over there, tied to a tree?" said Pilgrim.

"And the luggage?" asked 8 Rules.

"Isn't it there by your head?" said Pilgrim.

"This family is rather shift!" said 8 Rules. "If they have moved, why didn't they give us a call? If they had let Old bull know about it, they might have received some farewell gifts of tea and fruits. Well, I suppose they must be trying to hide from something and are afraid that the county sheriff may get wind of it; so they moved out in the night. Good Heavens! We must have been dead to the world! How could we not have heard anything when they dismantled the whole house?"

"Idiot, stop babbling!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Take a look on that tree and see what kind of paper-slip's there." 8 Rules took it down. It was a 2-line poem that read:

*This humble abode's no mortal abode: a cottage devised<sup>9</sup> by the Guardians of Law who gave the wondrous balm to heal your sore.*

*Fret not and do your best to quell the fiend.*

Pilgrim said, "A bunch of roguish deities! Since we changed to the dragon-horse, I'd not taken a roll call of them. Now they are playing tricks on me instead!"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "stop putting on such airs! How would they ever let you check them off the roll?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "you don't know about this. These Eighteen Protectors of Monasteries, the Six Gods of Darkness and Six Gods of Light, the Guardians of Five Points, and the Four Sentinels all have been ordered by the Nun to give secret protection to Master. The other day they reported their names to me but since you've been with us, I've not made use of them. That's why I've not made a roll call."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "if they were ordered to give secret protection to Master, they had reason not to reveal themselves. That's why they had to devise this cottage here, and you'd not blame them. After all, they did put ointment on your eyes for you yesterday, and they did take care of us for one meal. You can say that they have done their duty. Don't blame them. Let's go and rescue Master."

"Brother, you're right," said Pilgrim. "This place is not far from the Yellow Wind Cave. You had better stay here and look after the horse and luggage in the woods. Let old monkey go into the cave to make some inquiry after the condition of Master. Then we can do battle with the monster again."

"Exactly," said 8 Rules. "You'd find out whether Master is dead or alive; if he's dead, each one of us can tend to our own business; if he's not, we can do our best to discharge our responsibility." Pilgrim said, "Stop talking nonsense! I'm off!"

With one leap he arrived at the entrance of the cave and found the door still shut and the inhabitants sound asleep. Pilgrim neither made any noise nor disturbed the monsters; making the magic sign and reciting the spell, he shook his body and changed at once into a spotted-leg mosquito. It was tiny and delicate for which a testimonial poem says:

*A pesky small shape with sharp sting; his tiny voice can hum like thunder!*

*Adept at piercing gauze nets and orchid rooms, he likes the warm, sultry climate.  
He fears incense and swatting fans but dearly loves bright lights and lamps.  
Airy, agile, all too clever and fast, he flies into the fiend's cave.<sup>10</sup>*

The little demon who was supposed to guard the door was lying there asleep, snoring. Pilgrim gave him a bite on his face, causing the little demon to roll over half awakened. "O my dad!" he said. "What a big mosquito! One bite and I already have a big lump." He then opened his eyes and said, "Why, it's dawn!" Just then, the second door inside opened with a creak, and Pilgrim immediately flew in. The old monster was giving orders to all his subordinates to be especially careful in guarding the various entrances while they made ready their weapons. "If the wind yesterday did not kill that Pilgrim Sun," he said, "he will certainly come back today. When he comes, we'll finish him off."

Hearing this, Pilgrim flew past the main hall and arrived at the rear of the cave where he found another door tightly shut. Crawling through a crack in the door, he discovered a large garden, in the middle of which, bound by ropes to a pole, was the Tang Monk. That master was shedding tears profusely, constantly wondering where Wukong and Aware of Ability were to be found. Pilgrim stopped his flight and alighted on his bald head, saying, "Master!" Recognising his voice, the Elder said, "Wukong, I nearly died thinking of you! Where are you calling from?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "I'm on your head. Calm yourself and stop worrying. We must first capture the monster before we can rescue you. "Disciple," said the Tang Monk, "when will you be able to capture the monster?"

"The Tiger Monster who took you," said Pilgrim, "has already been slain by 8 Rules. But the wind of the old monster is a powerful weapon. I suspect we'd be able to capture him today. Relax and stop crying. I'm leaving."

Having said that, he flew at once to the front where the old monster was seated aloft, making a roll call of all the commanders of his troops. A little demon suddenly appeared, waving the command flag. He dashed up to the hall, crying, "Great King, this little one was on patrol in the mountain when he ran into a monk with a long horn and huge ears sitting in the woods not far from our entrance. If I'd not run away quickly, he would have caught me. But I didn't see that hairy-faced monk who came here yesterday."

"If Pilgrim Sun is absent," said the old monster, "it may mean that he's been killed by the wind. Or, he may have gone to try to find help."

"Great King," said one of the demons, "it would be our good fortune if he had been killed. But suppose he's not dead? If he succeeds in bringing with him some divine warriors, what shall we do then?" The old monster said, "Who's afraid of any divine warrior? Only the Nun Lingji can overcome the power of my wind; no one else can do us any harm."

That Pilgrim resting on one of the beams above him was delighted by this one statement. He flew out of the cave at once and, changing back into his original form, arrived at the woods. "Brother!" he cried. 8 Rules asked, "Elder Brother where have you been? Just now a monster with a command flag came by, and I chased him away."

"Thank you! Thank you!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "Old monkey changed into a mosquito to enter the cave to see how Master was doing. I found him tied to a post in the garden, weeping. After telling him not to cry, I flew around the roof to spy on them some more. That was when the fellow who held the command flag came in panting, saying that you had chased him. He also said that he had not seen me. The old monster made some wild speculations about my having been killed by the wind, or else having gone to find help. Then without being prompted, he suddenly mentioned someone else. It's marvellous, simply marvellous!"

"Whom did he mention?" asked 8 Rules.

"He said that he's afraid of no divine warrior," said Pilgrim, "for no one else could overpower his wind save the Nun Lingji. The only trouble's that I don't know where this Lingji lives."

As they were thus conversing, they suddenly saw an aged man walking by the side of the main road. Look at his appearance: *strong, he uses no cane to walk with flowing snow-like hair and beard. Though wit and eyes are quite dim and blurry, thin bones and sinews are still tough. Back and head bent he walked slowly with thick brows and a pink face, childlike. Look at his features and they seem human though he's like Long-Life Star no less!*<sup>11</sup>Highly pleased when he caught sight of him, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, the proverb says: *you want to know the way, hear what the tourist say.* Why don't you approach him and ask?"

The Great Sage put away his iron rod and straightened out his clothes. Approaching the old man, he said, "Aged Sir, receive my salute."

Somewhat reluctantly, the old man returned his greeting, saying, "What region are you from, monk? What're you doing here in this wilderness?"

"We're holy monks on our way to seek scriptures," said Pilgrim. "Yesterday we lost our master here, and so I'm approaching you to ask where the Nun Lingji lives."

"Lingji lives south of here," said the old man, "about three thousand miles away. There is a mountain called the Little Sumeru Mountain that has within it a Land of the Way, the Chan hall where the Nun lectures on *Threads*. I suppose you're trying to obtain scriptures from him."

"Not from him," said Pilgrim, "but I've something that requires his attention. Will you please show me the way?" Pointing with his hand toward the south, the old man said, "Follow that winding path." The Great Sage Sun was tricked into turning his head to look at the path, when the old man changed himself into a gentle breeze and vanished. A small slip of paper was left beside the road on which was written this quatrain:

*To tell the Equal to Heaven Great Sage, the old man is in truth 1 Long Life Li!  
On Sumeru's the Flying-Dragon Staff.  
Lingji in years past received this Religious arm.*

Pilgrim took up the slip and went back down the road. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "our luck must have been rather bad lately. For two days we saw ghosts in broad daylight. Who is that old man who left after changing into a breeze?" Pilgrim gave 8 Rules the slip of paper. "Who is this Long-Life Li?" asked 8 Rules, when he had read the verse. "It's the name of the Planet Venus from the West," said Pilgrim. 8 Rules hurriedly saluted toward the sky, crying, "Benefactor! Benefactor! Had it not been for the Gold Star who personally begged the Jade Emperor to be merciful, I don't know what would have become of Old bull!"

"Elder Brother," said Pilgrim, "you've a sense of gratitude. But don't expose yourself. Take cover deep in the woods and carefully guard the luggage and the horse. Let old monkey find the Sumeru Mountain and seek help from the Nun."

"I know, I know!" said 8 Rules. "Hurry up and go! Old bull has mastered the law of the turtle: withdraw your head when you needn't stick it out!"

The Great Sage Sun leaped into the air; mounting the cloud-somersault, he headed straight south. He was fast, indeed! With a nod of his head, he covered three thousand miles; just a twist of his torso carried him over eight hundred! In a moment he saw a tall mountain with auspicious clouds hanging halfway up its slopes and holy mists gathered around it. In the fold of the mountain there was indeed a temple. He could hear the melodious sounds of the bells and sonorous stones<sup>12</sup> and could see the swirling smoke of incense. As he approached the door, the Great Sage saw a Daoist with a string of beads around his neck who was reciting the name of God. Pilgrim said, "Daoist, please accept my salute."

The Daoist at once saluted in return saying, "Where did the venerable dad come from?"

"Is this where the Nun Lingji expounds the scriptures?" asked Pilgrim. "Indeed it is," said the Daoist. "Do you wish to speak to someone?"

"May I trouble you, sir, to make this announcement for me," said Pilgrim. "I'm the disciple of the master of the Law, Tripitaka who is the royal brother of the Great Tang Emperor in the Land of the East; I'm the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, Sun Wukong, and also named Pilgrim. I've a matter that requires me to have an audience with the Nun."

The Daoist laughed and said, "The venerable dad's given me a long announcement! I can't quite remember all those words."

"Just say that Sun Wukong, the disciple of the Tang Monk's arrived," said Pilgrim.<sup>13</sup>The Daoist agreed and made that announcement in the lecture hall whereupon the Nun at once put on his cassock and asked for more incense to be burned to welcome the visitor. Then the Great Sage walked in the door and peered inside. He saw *a hall full of brocade and silk; a house most solemn and grand; pupils reciting the Lotus Thread; an old leader tapping the golden gong. Set before a god were all mortal fruits and flowers. Spread out on the altars were vegetarian dainties and viands. The bright, precious candles, their golden flames shot up like rainbows; the fragrant true incense, its jade-like smoke flew up as coloured mists. So it was that after the lecture 1 would calmly meditate when white-cloud flakes circled the tips of pines. The wisdom sword retired for Killing snapped in this space of the Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom.* The Nun straightened out his attire to receive Pilgrim who entered the hall and took the seat of the guest. Tea was offered but Pilgrim said, "No need for you to bother about tea. My master faces peril at the Yellow Wind Mountain and I beseech the Nun to exercise his great religion power to defeat the monster and rescue him."

"I did receive the command of Siddhartha," said the Nun, "to keep the Yellow Wind Monster here in submission. Siddhartha also gave me a Wind-Stopping Pearl and a Flying-Dragon Precious Staff. At the time when I captured him, I spared the monster his life only on condition that he'd retire in the mountain and abstain from the sin of taking life. I didn't know that he would want to harm your esteemed teacher and transgress the Law. That is my fault." The Nun would have liked to prepare some vegetarian food to entertain Pilgrim but Pilgrim insisted on leaving. So he took the Flying-Dragon Staff and mounted the clouds with the Great Sage.

In a little while they reached the Yellow Wind Mountain. "Great Sage," said the Nun, "this monster's rather afraid of me. I'll stand here at the edge of the clouds while you go down there to provoke battle. Entice him to come out so that I may exercise my power."

Pilgrim followed his suggestion and lowered his cloud. Without waiting for further announcement, he whipped out his iron rod and smashed the door of the cave, crying, "Monster, give me back my master!"

Those little demons standing guard at the door were so terrified that they ran to make the report. "This lawless ape's," said the monster, "truly ill-behaved! He'd not defer to kindness and now he's even broken my door! This time when I go out, I'm going to use that divine wind to blow him to death." He put on his armour as before, and took up the steel trident. Walking out of the door and seeing Pilgrim, he did not utter a word before aiming the trident at Pilgrim's chest. The Great Sage stepped aside to dodge this blow and then faced him with uplifted rod. Before they had fought for a few rounds, the monster turned his head toward the ground in the southwest and was about to open his mouth to summon the wind. From mid-air, the Nun threw down the Flying-Dragon Precious Staff as he recited some kind of spell. It was instantly transformed into a golden dragon with eight claws, two of which caught hold of that monster's head and threw him two or three times against the boulders beside the mountain cliff. The monster changed back into his original form and became a mink with yellow fur.

Pilgrim ran up and was about to strike with his rod but he was stopped by the Nun who said to him, "Great Sage, do not harm him. I've to take him back to see Siddhartha. Originally he's a rodent at the foot of the Spirit Mountain who'd acquired the Way. Because he stole some of the pure oil in the crystal chalice, he fled for fear that the *Lightning* attendants would seize him. Siddhartha thought that he's not guilty of death and that's why I was asked to capture him in the first place and banish him to this region. But now he's offended the Great Sage and has attempted to harm the Tang Monk. Therefore I must take him to see Siddhartha so that his guilt may be clearly established. Only then will this merit be completed."

When Pilgrim heard this, he thanked the Nun who left for the West. Bullseye 8 Rules was thinking about Pilgrim in the woods when he heard someone calling down by the slope, "Brother Aware of Ability, bring the horse and the luggage here." Recognising Pilgrim's voice, Idiot quickly ran out of the woods and said to Pilgrim, "Elder Brother, how did everything go?"

"I invited the Nun Lingji to come here," said Pilgrim, "to use his Flying-Dragon Staff to capture the monster. He's a mink with yellow fur who became a spirit and now been taken by the Nun to Spirit Mountain to face Siddhartha. Let's go into the cave to rescue Master."

Idiot was delighted. The 2 of them smashed their way into the cave and with their rake and rod slaughtered all the wily hares, the vixen, the musk deer, and the horned deer. Then they went to the garden in the back to rescue their master who asked after coming out, "How did you two manage to catch the monster so that you'd rescue me?" Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how he went to seek the Nun's help to subdue the monster and the master thanked him profusely. Then the 2 brothers found some vegetarian food in the cave that they prepared along with some tea and rice. They left after eating and again found the road to the West.

## 022

### 8 Rules fights fiercely at the Flowing-Sand River; Liberation by order receives Awakened to Purity's submission

The Tang Monk and his disciples, the 3 travellers who were delivered from their ordeal. In less than a day they passed the Yellow Wind Mountain and proceeded toward the West through a vast level plain. Time went by swiftly, and summer yielded to the arrival of autumn. All they saw were some *cold cicadas recite on dying willows as the Great Fire rolls toward the West.*

As they proceeded, they came upon a huge and turbulent river, its waves surging and splashing. "Disciples," exclaimed Tripitaka, "look at that vast expanse of water in front of us. Why are there no boats in sight? How can we get across?" Taking a close look, 8 Rules said, "It's very turbulent, too rough for any boat!" Pilgrim leaped into the air and peered into the distance, shading his eyes with his hand. Even he became somewhat frightened and said, "Master, it's truly hard! Truly hard! If old monkey wishes to cross this river, he need only make one twist of his body and he will reach the other shore. But for you, Master, it's a thousand times more difficult, for you can't traverse it even in ten millennia!"

"I can't even see the other shore from here," said Tripitaka. "Really, how wide is it?"

"It's just about eight hundred miles wide," said Pilgrim. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "how could you determine its width just like that?"

"To tell you the truth, Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim, "these eyes of mine can determine good or evil up to a thousand miles away in daylight. Just now when I was up in the air, I'd not tell how long the river was but I'd make out its width to be at least eight hundred miles." Sighing anxiously, the elder pulled back his horse and suddenly discovered on the shore a slab of stone. When the 3 of them drew closer to have a look, they saw 3 words written in seal-script below which there were also 4 lines written in regular style. It read:

*Flowing-Sand River  
These Flowing-Sand metes, 800 wide;  
These Weak Waters, 3000 deep.  
A goose feather cannot stay afloat;  
A rush petal will sink to the bottom.*

As master and disciples were reading the inscription, the waves in the river suddenly rose like tall mountains and with a loud splash from the midst of the waters a monster sprang out. Looking most savage and hideous, he had a *head full of tousled and flame-like hair; a pair of bright, round eyes which shone like lamps; an indigo face, neither black nor green; an old dragon's voice like thunderclap or drum. He wore a cape of light yellow goose down. 2 strands of white reeds tied around his waist. Beneath his chin nine skulls were strung and hung; his hands held an awesome priestly staff.* Like a cyclone, the fiend rushed up to the shore and went straight for the Tang Monk. Pilgrim was so taken aback that he grabbed his master and dashed for high ground to make the escape. Putting down the pole, 8 Rules whipped out his rake and brought it down hard on the monster. The fiend used his staff to parry the blow, and so the two of them began to unleash their power on the bank of the Flowing-Sand River. *This was some battle! The 9-pronged rake; the fiend-routing staff; these 2 met in battle on the river shore. This one was the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds: that 1 was the Curtain-Raising Captain by the Throne. In years past they met in Divine Mists Hall; today they fought and waged a test of might. From this one the rake went out like a dragon stretching its claws; from that 1 the staff blocked the way like a sharp-tusked elephant. They stood with their limbs outstretched; each struck at the other's ribcage. This 1 raked madly, heedless of head or face; that 1 struck wildly without pause or rest. This 1 was a cannibal spirit, long a lord of Flowing-Sand; that 1 was a Way-seeking fighter upholding Law and Faith.* Closing in repeatedly, the two of them fought for twenty rounds but neither emerged the victor. The Great Sage meanwhile was standing there to protect the Tang Monk. As he held the horse and guarded the luggage, he became so aroused by the sight of 8 Rules engaging that fiend that he ground his teeth and rubbed his hands vehemently. Finally he could not restrain himself – whipping out the rod, he said, "Master, sit here and don't be afraid. Let old monkey go play with him a little." The master begged in vain for him to stay, and with a loud whoop he leaped forward. The monster was just having a grand time fighting with 8 Rules, the two of them so tightly locked in combat that nothing seemed able to part them. Pilgrim however, rushed up to the monster and delivered a terrific blow at his head with his iron rod. The monster was so shaken that he jumped aside: tumbling around he dove straight into the Flowing-Sand River and disappeared. 8 Rules was so upset that he leaped about wildly, crying, "Elder Brother! Who asked you to come? The monster was gradually weakening and was finding it difficult to parry my rake. Another four or five rounds and I'd have captured him. But when he saw how fierce you're, he fled in defeat. Now, what shall we do?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim laughing, "to tell you the truth, since defeating the Yellow Wind Fiend a month ago, I've not played with my rod all this time after leaving the mountain.<sup>1</sup> When I saw how delicious your fight with him was, I'd not stand the itch beneath my feet! That's why I jumped up here to have some fun with him. That monster doesn't know how to play, and I suppose that's the reason for his departure."

Holding hands and teasing each other, the two of them returned to the Tang Monk. "Did you catch the monster?" asked the Tang Monk.

"He didn't last out the fight," said Pilgrim, "and scrambled back to the water in defeat."

"Disciple," said Tripitaka, "since this monster has probably lived here a long time, he ought to know the deep and the shallow parts of the river. After all, such a boundless body of weak water, and not a boat in sight – we need someone who is familiar with the region to lead us across."

"Exactly!" said Pilgrim. "As the proverb says, *he who's near cinnabar turns red and near ink becomes black.* The monster living here must've a good knowledge of the water. When we catch him, we'd not slay him but just make him take Master across the river before we dispose of him."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "no need for further delay. You go ahead and catch him while Old bull guards our master."

"Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim with a laugh, "in this case I've really nothing to brag about, for I'm just uncomfortable doing business in water. If all I do is walk around down there, I still have to make the magic sign and recite the water-repelling spell before I can move anywhere. Or else I've to change into a water creature like a fish, shrimp, crab, or turtle before going in. If it were a matter of matching wits in the high mountains or up in the clouds, I know enough to deal with the strangest and most difficult situation. But doing business in water somewhat cramps my style!"

"When I was Marshal of the Heavenly River in former years," said 8 Rules, "I commanded a naval force of eighty thousand men, and I acquired some knowledge of that element. But I fear that that monster may have a few relatives down there in his den, and I'll be unable to withstand him if his seventh and eighth cousins all come out. What'll happen to me if they grab me then?"

"If you go into the water to fight him," said Pilgrim, "don't tarry. Make sure in fact that you feign defeat and entice him out here. Then old monkey will help you."

"Right you're," said 8 Rules. "I'm off!" He took off his blue silk shirt and his shoes; holding the rake with both hands, he divided the waters to make a path for himself. Using the ability he had developed in bygone years, he leaped through billows and waves and headed for the bottom of the river.

We now tell you about that monster who went back to his home in defeat. He had barely caught his breath when he heard someone pushing water, and as he rose to take a look, he saw 8 Rules pushing his way through with his rake. That monster lifted his staff and met him face to face, crying, "Monk, watch where you're going or you'll receive a blow from this!" Using the rake to block the blow, 8 Rules said, "What sort of a monster are you that you dare to bar our way?"

"So you don't recognise me," said the monster. "I'm no demon or fiend, nor do I lack a name or surname."

"If you're no demon or fiend," said 8 Rules, "why do you stay here and take human lives? Tell me your name and surname, and I'll spare your life."

The monster said: *"My spirit's strong since the time of birth. I once made a tour of the universe where my fame as a hero became well-known – a gallant type for all to emulate. Through countless nations I went as I pleased; over lakes and seas I did freely roam. To learn the Way I strayed to Heaven's edge; to find a teacher I stumped this great earth. For years my clothes and alms bowl went with me: not for one day did my spirit turn lax. For scores of times I cruised cloudlike the earth and walked to all places a hundred times. Only then a true mortal I did meet who showed me the Great Path of Golden Light. I took back Baby Boy and Fair Girl first; then released Wood Mum and Squire of Gold. <sup>3</sup>Bright Hall's kidney-brine flooded Floral Pool; <sup>5</sup>the Tower's liver-fire plunged to the heart. Three thousand merits done, I saw Heaven's face and solemnly worshipped the Point of Light. Then the Jade Emperor exalted me; the Curtain-Raising Captain he made me. An honoured one in South Heaven Gate, I was much esteemed at Divine Mists Hall. I hung at my waist the Tiger-Headed Shield: I held in my hands the Fiend-Routing Staff. Just like the sunlight my gold helmet shone; my body's armour flashed like radiant mists. I was chief of the guardians of the Throne: I was first as attendant of the court. When Queen Mum gave the Festival of Peach – she served her guests at Jasper Pool a feast – I dropped and broke a glass-like cup of jade and souls from all the hosts of Heaven fled. Jade Emperor grew mightily enraged; hands clasped, he faced his counsel on the left. Stripped of my hat, armour, and rank, I'd my whole body pushed to the block. Only the Great Mortal, Naked Feet came from the ranks and begged to have me freed. Pardoned from death and with my sentence stayed, I was sent to the shores of Flowing-Sand. Sated, I lie wearily in the stream; famished, I churn the waves to find my feed. The woodsman sees me and his life is gone; the fishers face me and they soon perish. From first to last I've eaten many men; repeatedly I took human lives. Since you dare to work violence at my door, my stomach this day has its fondest hopes! Don't say you're too coarse to be eaten now. I'll catch you, and look, that's my minced meat sauce!"*

Infuriated by what he heard, 8 Rules shouted, "You brazen thing! You've not the slightest perception! Old bull's tempting enough to make people's mouths water and you daresay that I'm coarse and to be chopped up for a chopped meat sauce! Come to think of it, you'd like to consider me a piece of tough old steak! Watch your manners and swallow this rake of your ancestor!" When the monster saw the rake coming, he used the style of *the phoenix nodding its head* to dodge the blow. The 2 of them thus fought to the surface of the water, each 1 treading the waters and waves. This conflict was somewhat different from the one before. Look at the *Curtain-Raising Captain, the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds: each showing most nicely his magic might. This one waved above his head the fiend-routing staff: that 1 moved the rake as swiftly as his hand. The vaulting waves rocked hills and streams; the surging tide the cosmos dimmed. Savage like Jupiter wielding banners and flags! Fierce like Hell's envoy upsetting sacred tops! This one guarded the Tang Monk devotedly; that 1, a water fiend perpetrated his crimes. The rake's 1 stroke would leave 9 red marks: the staff's 1 blow would dissolve man's soul. They strove to win the fight; they struggled to prevail. Overall for the scripture pilgrim's sake, they vented their fury without restraint. They brawled till carps, perches lost their new-born scales, and all turtles damaged their tender shells. Red shrimps, purple crabs all lost their lives, and sundry water gods all upward saluted! You heard only the waves rolled and crashed like thunderclaps. The world amazed saw sun and moon grow dark!* The 2 of them fought for two hours, and neither prevailed. It was like a brass pan meeting an iron broom, a jade gong facing a golden bell. The Great Sage was standing guard beside the Tang Monk. With bulging eyes he watched them fighting on the water but he dared not lift his hands. Finally, 8 Rules made a half-hearted blow with his rake and, feigning defeat, turned to flee toward the eastern shore. The monster gave chase and was about to reach the river bank when our Pilgrim could no longer restrain himself. He abandoned his master, whipped out the iron rod, leaped to the riverside and struck at the monster's head. Fearing to face him, the monster swiftly dove back into the river. "You Ban-Horse-Plague!" shouted 8 Rules. "You impulsive ape! Can't you be a bit more patient? You'd have waited until I led him up to high ground and then blocked his path to the river. We'd have caught him then. Now he's gone back in and when do you think he'll come out again?"

"Idiot," said Pilgrim laughing, "stop shouting! Let's go talk to Master first."

8 Rules went with Pilgrim back to high ground to Tripitaka. "Disciple," said Tripitaka, saluting, "you must be tired!"

"I'll not complain about my fatigue," said 8 Rules. "Let's subdue the monster and take you across the river. Only that plan's perfect!"

Tripitaka said, "How did the battle go with the monster just now?"

"He's just about my equal," said 8 Rules, "and we fought to a draw. But then I feigned defeat and he chased me up to the bank. When he saw Elder Brother lifting his rod however, he fled."

"So what are we going to do?" asked Tripitaka.

"Master, relax!" said Pilgrim. "Let's not worry now, for it's getting late. You sit here on the cliff and let old monkey go beg some vegetarian food. Take some rest after you eat, and we'll find a solution tomorrow."

"You're right," said 8 Rules. "Go, and come back quickly."

Pilgrim swiftly mounted the clouds and went north to beg a bowl of vegetarian food from a family to present to his master. When the master saw him return so soon, he said, "Wukong, let us go to that household which gave us the food and ask them how we may cross this river. Isn't this better than fighting the monster?" With a laugh, Pilgrim said, "That household is quite far from here, about six or seven thousand miles, no less! How could the people there know about the water? What's the use of asking them?"

"You're fibbing again, Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules. "Six or seven thousand miles, how could you cover that distance so quickly?"

"You've no idea," said Pilgrim, "about the capacity of my cloud somersault that with one leap can cover one hundred and eight thousand miles. For the six or seven thousand here, all I've to do is to nod my head and stretch my waist, and that's a round trip already! What's so hard about that?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "if it's so easy, all you need to do is to carry Master on your back: nod your head, stretch your waist, and jump across. Why continue to fight this monster?"

"Don't you know how to ride the clouds?" asked Pilgrim. "Can't you carry him across the river?"

"The mortal nature and worldly bones of Master are as heavy as the Tai Mountain," 8 Rules said. "How could my cloud soaring bear him up? It has to be your cloud somersault."

"My cloud somersault is essentially like cloud soaring," said Pilgrim, "the only difference being that I can cover greater distances more rapidly. If you can't carry him, what makes you think I can? There's an old proverb that says: *Move Mount Tai: it's light as mustard seeds. Lift a man and you'll not leave the red dust!* Take this monster here: he can use spells and call upon the wind, pushing and pulling a little but he can't carry a human into the air. And if it's this kind of magic, old monkey knows every trick well, including becoming invisible and making distances shorter. But it is required of Master to go through all these strange territories before he finds deliverance from the sea of sorrows; hence even one step turns out to be difficult. You and I are only his protective companions, guarding his body and life but we can't exempt him from these woes, nor can we obtain the scriptures all by ourselves. Even if we'd the ability to go and see God first, he'd not bestow the scriptures on you and me. Remember the adage: *What's easily gotten is soon forgotten.*"

When Idiot heard these words, he accepted them amiably as instruction. Master and disciples ate some of the simply prepared vegetarian food before resting on the eastern shore of the Flowing-Sand River. The next morning, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, what are we going to do today?"

"Not much," said Pilgrim, "except that 8 Rules must go into the water again."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you only want to stay clean but you've no hesitation making me go into the water."

"Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim, "this time I'll try not to be impulsive. I'll let you trick him into coming up here, and then I'll block his retreat along the river bank. We must capture him."



*Dear 8 Rules!* Wiping his face, he pulled himself together. Holding the rake in both hands, he walked to the edge of the river, opened up a path in the water, and went to the monster’s home as before. The monster had just wakened from his sleep when he heard the sound of water. Turning quickly to look, he saw 8 Rules approaching with the rake. He leaped out at once and barred the way, shouting, “Slow down! Watch out for my staff!” 8 Rules lifted his rake to parry the blow, saying, “What sort of mourning staff do you’ve there that you dare ask your ancestor to watch out for it?” “A fellow like you,” said the monster, “wouldn’t recognise this! *For years my staff has enjoyed great fame, at first an evergreen tree in the moon. Wu Gang’ cut down from it one huge limb: Lu Ban then made it, using all his skills. Within the hub’s one solid piece of gold: outside it’s wrapped by countless pearly threads. It’s called the treasure staff for crushing fiends ever placed in Divine Mists to quell the ogres. Since I’d made a mighty general’s rank, Jade Emperor put it always by my side. It lengthens or shortens after my desire; it grows thick or thin with my command. It went to guard the Throne at the Peaches Feast: it served at court in Heaven’s world above. On duty it saw the many sages saluted and mortals, too when the screen rolled up. Of numinous power one arm divine, it’s no worldly weapon of humankind. Since I was banished from the gate of Heaven, it roamed with me at will beyond the seas. Perhaps it is not right for me to boast but swords and spears of man can’t match this staff. Look at that old, rusted muckrake of yours: fit only for hoeing fields and raking herbs!*”

“You un-chastened brazen thing!” said 8 Rules, laughing. “Never mind whether it’s fit for hoeing fields! One little touch and you’ll not even know how to begin putting bandages or ointment on nine bleeding holes! You’ll grow old with chronic infection even if you’re not killed!” The monster raised his hands and again fought with 8 Rules from the bottom of the river up to the surface of the water. This battle was even more different from the first one. Look at them *wielding the treasure staff. Striking with muckrake; they would not speak as if they were estranged. Since Wood Mum constrained the Spatula<sup>8</sup> that caused the 2 to fight most fiercely. No win or loss; with no regret. They churned up waves and billows with no peace. How could this one control his bitter rage that one found unbearable his pain? Rake and staff went back and forth to show their might; the water rotted like poison in Flowing-Sand. They huffed, puffed, worked, and toiled! All because Tripitaka would face the West. The muckrake so ferocious! The staff so nimbly used! This one made a grab to pull him up the shore; that one sought to seize and drown him in the stream. They roared like thunder, stirring dragon and fish. Gods and ghosts cowered as the Heavens grew dim.* This time they fought back and forth for thirty rounds, and neither one proved to be the stronger. Again 8 Rules pretended to be defeated and fled, dragging his rake. Kicking up the waves, the monster gave chase and they reached the edge of the river. “Wretch!” cried 8 Rules. “Come up here! We can fight better on solid ground up here.” “You’re just trying to trick me into going up there,” scolded the monster, “so that you can bring out your assistant. You come down here, and we can fight in the water.” The monster had become wise; he refused to go up to the bank and remained near the edge of the water to argue with 8 Rules. When Pilgrim saw that the monster refused to leave the water, he became highly irritated, and all he could think of was to catch him at once. “Master,” he said, “you sit here. Let me give him a taste of the ‘ravenous eagle seizing his prey.’” He somersaulted into the air and then swooped down onto the monster who was still bickering with 8 Rules. When he heard the sound of the wind, he turned quickly and discovered Pilgrim hurtling down from the clouds. Putting away his staff, he dove into the water and disappeared. Pilgrim stood on the shore and said to 8 Rules, “Brother, that monster is catching on! He refuses to come up now. What shall we do?”

“It’s hard, terribly hard!” said 8 Rules. “I just can’t beat him – even when I summoned up the strength of my milk-drinking days! We’re evenly matched!”

“Let’s go talk to Master,” said Pilgrim.

The 2 of them went up again to high ground and told the Tang Monk everything. “If it’s so difficult,” said the elder, tears welling up in his eyes, “how can we ever get across?”

“Master, please don’t worry,” said Pilgrim. “It is hard for us to cross with this monster hiding deep in the river. So, don’t fight with him anymore, 8 Rules; just stay here and protect Master. I’m going to make a trip up to South Sea.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “what do you want to do at South Sea?” Pilgrim said, “This business of seeking scriptures originated from the Nun Guanyin; the one who delivered us from our ordeals was also the Nun Guanyin. Today our path is blocked at this Flowing-Sand River and we can’t proceed. Without her, how can we ever solve our problem? Let me go ask her to help us: it’s much better than doing battle with this monster.”

“You’ve a point there, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules. “When you get there, please convey my gratitude to her for her kindly instructions in the past.”

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “if you want to go see the Nun, you needn’t delay. Go, and hurry back.”

Pilgrim catapulted into the air with his cloud somersault and headed for the South Sea. Ah! It did not even take him half an hour before he saw the scenery of the Potalaka Mountain. In a moment, he dropped down from his somersault and arrived at the edge of the purple bamboo grove where he was met by the Spirits of the Twenty-Four Ways. They said to him, “Great Sage, what brings you here?”

“My master faces an ordeal,” said Pilgrim, “which brings me here specially to see the Nun.”

“Please take a seat,” said the spirits, “and allow us to make the announcement.” One of the spirits who was on duty went to the entrance of the Tidal-Sound Cave, announcing, “Sun Wukong wishes to have an audience with you.” The Nun was leaning on the rails by the Treasure Lotus Pool, looking at the flowers with the Pearl-Bearing Dragon Princess. When she heard the announcement, she went back to the cave, opened the door, and asked that he be shown in. With great solemnity, the Great Sage saluted himself before her.

“Why are you not accompanying the Tang Monk?” asked the Nun. “For what reason did you want to see me again?”

“Nun,” said Pilgrim, looking up at her, “my master took another disciple at the Gao Village, to whom you had given the religious name of Aware of Ability. After crossing the Yellow Wind Ridge, we’ve now arrived at the Flowing-Sand River eight hundred miles wide, a body of weak water that is difficult for Master to get across. There is, moreover, a monster in the river who is quite accomplished in the martial arts. We’re grateful to Aware of Ability who fought in the water with him three times but could not beat him. The monster is in fact blocking our path and we can’t get across. That is why I’ve come to see you, hoping you’ll take pity and grant us deliverance.”

“Monkey,” said the Nun, “are you still acting so smug and self-sufficient that you refuse to disclose the fact that you’re in the service of the Tang Monk?”

“All we’d intended to do,” said Pilgrim, “was to catch the monster and make him take Master across the river. I’m not too good at doing business in the water, so Aware of Ability went down alone to his lair to look for him, and they had some conversation. I presume the matter of scripture seeking was not mentioned.”

“That monster in the Flowing-Sand River,” said the Nun, “happens to be the incarnate Curtain-Raising Captain who was also brought into the faith by my persuasion when I told him to accompany those on their way to acquire scriptures. Had you been willing to mention that you’re a scripture pilgrim from the Land of the East, he would not have fought you; he would have yielded instead.” Pilgrim said,

“That monster is afraid to fight now; he refuses to come up to the shore and is hiding deep in the water. How can we bring him to submission? How can my master get across this body of weak water?” The Nun immediately called for Hui’an. Taking a little red gourd from her sleeves, she handed it over to him, saying, “Take this gourd and go with Sun Wukong to the Flowing-Sand River. Call ‘Awakened to Purity,’ and he’ll come out at once. You must first take him to submit to the Tang Monk. Next, string together those nine skulls of his and arrange them according to the position of the Nine Palaces. Put this gourd in the centre, and you’ll have a religion vessel ready to ferry the Tang Monk across the boundary formed by the Flowing-Sand River.” Obeying the instructions of his master, Hui’an left the Tidal-Sound Cave with the Great Sage carrying the gourd. As they departed the purple bamboo grove in compliance with the holy command, a testimonial poem says:

*The 5 Phases well matched as Heaven’s truth, his former master he can recognise.  
Refine the self as base for wondrous use; good and bad discerned will reveal the cause.  
Metal returns to nature – the same kind are both. Wood begs for favour: they’ll all be redeemed.  
2-Earths<sup>9</sup> completes merit to reach the void: water and fire blended, dustless and clean.*

In a little while the two of them lowered their clouds and arrived at the Flowing-Sand River. Recognising the disciple Liberation, Bullseye 8 Rules led his master to receive him. After saluting Tripitaka, Liberation then greeted 8 Rules who said, “I was grateful to be instructed by Your Reverence so that I’d meet the Nun. I’ve indeed obeyed the Law, and I’m happy recently to have entered the gate of Religion. Since we’ve been constantly on the road, I’ve yet to thank you. Please forgive me.”

“Let’s forget about these fancy conversations,” said Pilgrim. “We must go and call that fellow.”

“Call whom?” asked Tripitaka. Pilgrim replied, “Old monkey saw the Nun and gave her an account of what happened. The Nun told me that this monster in the Flowing-Sand River happened to be the disciple of the Curtain-Raising Captain. Because he had sinned in Heaven, he was banished to this river and became a monster. But he was converted by the Nun who had told him to accompany you to the Western Heaven. Since we didn’t mention the matter of seeking scriptures, he fought us bitterly. Now the Nun has sent Liberation with this gourd that that fellow will turn into a religion vessel to take you across the river.” When Tripitaka heard these words, he saluted repeatedly to Liberation, saying, “I beseech Your Reverence to act quickly.” Holding the gourd and treading half on cloud and half on fog, Liberation moved directly above the surface of the Flowing-Sand River. He cried with a loud voice, “Awakened to Purity! Awakened to Purity! The scripture pilgrim has been here for a long time. Why have you not submitted?”

We now tell you about that monster who had gone back to the bottom of the river to rest in his den, fearful of the Monkey King. When he heard someone call him by his religious name, he knew that it had to be the Nun Guanyin. And when he heard, moreover, that the scripture pilgrim had arrived, he no longer feared the axe or the halberd. Swiftly he leaped out of the waves and saw that it was the disciple Liberation. Look at him! All smiles, he went forward and saluted, saying, “Your Reverence, forgive me for not coming to meet you. Where is the Nun?”

“My teacher didn’t come,” said Liberation, “but she sent me to tell you to become the disciple of the Tang Monk without delay. You’re to take the skulls around your neck and this gourd and fashion with them a religion vessel according to the position of the Nine Palaces so that he may be taken across this body of weak water.”

“Where is the scripture pilgrim?” asked Awakened to Purity.

Pointing with his finger, Liberation said, “Isn’t he the one sitting on the eastern shore?”

Awakened to Purity caught sight of 8 Rules and said, “I don’t know where that lawless creature came from! He fought with me for two whole days, never once saying a word about seeking scriptures.” When he saw Pilgrim, he said again. “That customer is his assistant, and a formidable one, too! I’m not going over there!”

“That is Bullseye 8 Rules,” said Liberation, “and that other one is Pilgrim Sun, both disciples of the Tang Monk and both converted by the Nun. Why fear them? I’ll escort you to the Tang Monk.” Only then did Awakened to Purity put away his precious staff and straighten his yellow silk shirt. He jumped ashore and knelt before Tripitaka, saying, “Master, your disciple’s eyes but no pupils and he failed to recognise your noble features. I’ve greatly offended you and beg you to pardon me.”

“You bum!” said 8 Rules. “Why did you not submit in the first place? Why did you only want to fight with me? What do you’ve to say for yourself?”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “don’t berate him. It’s really our fault for not mentioning that we’re seeking scriptures, and we didn’t tell him our names.”

“Are you truly willing to embrace our faith?” said the elder. “Your disciple was converted by the Nun,” said Awakened to Purity. “Deriving my surname from the river, she gave me the religious name Sand Awakened to Purity. How could I be unwilling to take you as my master?”

“In that case,” said Tripitaka, “Wukong may bring over the sacred razor and shave off his hair.” The Great Sage indeed took the razor and shaved Awakened to Purity’s head, after which he came again to pay homage to Tripitaka, Pilgrim, and 8 Rules, thus becoming the youngest disciple of the Tang Monk. When Tripitaka saw that he comported himself very much like a monk, he gave him the nickname of Sand-monk. “Since you’ve embraced the faith,” said Liberation, “there’s no need for further delay. You must build the religion vessel at once.”

Not daring to delay, Awakened to Purity took off the skulls around his neck and strung them up with a rope after the design of the Nine Palaces, placing the gourd in the middle. He then asked his master to leave the shore, and our elder thus embarked on the religion vessel. As he sat in the centre, he found it to be as sturdy as a little boat. He was, moreover, supported by 8 Rules on his left and Awakened to Purity on his right while Pilgrim Sun, leading the dragon-horse, followed in the rear, treading half on cloud and half on fog. Above their heads Liberation also took up his post to give them added protection. In this way our master of the Law was safely ferried across the boundary of the Flowing-Sand River: with the wind calm and waves quiet he crossed the weak water. It was truly as fast as flying or riding an arrow, for in a little while he reached the other shore, having been delivered from the mighty waves. He did not drag up mud or water, and happily both his hands and feet remained dry. In sum, he was pure and clean without engaging in any activity. When master and disciples reached solid ground again, Liberation descended from the auspicious clouds. As he took back his gourd, the nine skulls changed into nine curls of dark wind and vanished. Tripitaka saluted to thank Liberation and also gave thanks to the Nun. So it was that Liberation went straight back to the South Sea while Tripitaka mounted his horse to go to the West.

**023**  
**Tripitaka does not forget his origin; The 4 Sages test the priestly mind**  
*A long journey westward is his decree as frosted blooms fall in autumn’s mild breeze.  
Tie up the sly ape, don’t loosen the ropes! Hold back the mean horse, and don’t use the whip!  
Wood Mum was once fused with Metal Squire; Yellow Dame and Naked Son never did differ.<sup>1</sup>  
Bite open the iron ball – there’s mystery true: perfection of wisdom will come to you.*

The principal aim is to make clear that the way to acquire scriptures is no different from the way of attending to the fundamentals in one’s life. Master and disciples, the 4 of them who having awakened to the suchness of all things, broke free from the fetters of dust. Leaping clear from the sea of nature’s flowing sand, they were completely rid of any hindrance and proceeded westward on the main



road. They passed through countless green hills and blue waters; they saw wild grass and untended flowers in endless arrays. Time was swift indeed and soon it was autumn again. See *maple leaves redden the mountain; yellow blooms endure the night-wind. Old cicada's poem turns languid; sad crickets ever voice their plaint. Cracked lotus leaves like green silk fans; fragrant oranges like gold balls. Lovely, those rows of wild geese in dots they spread to distant sky.* As they journeyed, it was getting late again. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, "it's getting late. Where'll we go to spend the night?" "Master," said Pilgrim, "what you said isn't quite right. Those who've left home dine on the winds and rest beside the waters; they sleep beneath the moon and lie on the frost; any place can be their home in short. Why ask where we'd spend the night?" "Elder Brother," said Bullseye 8 Rules, "all you seem to care about is making progress on the journey and have no concern for the burdens of others. Since crossing the Flowing-Sand River, we've been doing nothing but scaling mountains and peaks and hauling this heavy load's becoming rather hard on me. Wouldn't it be much more reasonable to look for a house where we can ask for some tea, rice, and try to regain our strength?" "Idiot," said Pilgrim, "your words sound as if you begrudge this whole enterprise. If you think that you're still back in the Gao Village where you can enjoy the comfort that comes to you without your exerting yourself, then you'll not make it! If you've truly embraced the faith of Religion, you must be willing to endure pain and suffering; only then will you be a true disciple." "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "how heavy do you think this load of luggage is?" Pilgrim said, "Brother, since you and Sand-monk joined us, I've not had a chance to pole it. How would I know its weight?" "Ah! Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "just count the things here: *four yellow rattan mats; long and short, eight ropes in all. To guard against dampness and rain, there're blankets – three, four layers! The flat pole's too slippery, perhaps? You add nails on nails at both ends! Cast in iron and copper, the nine-ringed priestly staff. Made of bamboo and rattan, the long, large cloak.* With all this luggage, you'd pity Old bull who has to walk all day carrying it! You only are the disciple of our master: I've been made into a long-term labourer!" "Idiot!" said Pilgrim with a laugh, "to whom are you protesting?" "To you, Elder Brother," said 8 Rules. "If you're protesting to me," said Pilgrim, "you've made a mistake! Old monkey is solely concerned with Master's safety whereas you and Sand-monk have the special responsibility of looking after the luggage and the horse. If you ever slack off, you'll get a good whipping in the shanks from this huge rod!" "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "don't mention whipping, for that only means taking advantage of others by brute force. I realise that you've a proud and haughty nature, and you're not about to pole the luggage. But look how fat and strong the horse is that Master is riding: he's only carrying one old monk. Make him take a few pieces of luggage, for the sake of fraternal sentiment!" "So you think he's a horse!" said Pilgrim. "He's no earthly horse, for he is originally the son of Aorun, the Dragon King of the Western Ocean. Because he set fire to the palace and destroyed some of its pearls, his dad charged him with disobedience and he was condemned by Heaven. He was fortunate to have the Nun Guanyin save his life, and he was placed in the Eagle Grief Stream to await Master's arrival. At the appropriate time, the Nun also appeared personally to take off his scales and horns and to remove the pearls around his neck. It was then that he changed into this horse to carry Master to worship God in the Western Heaven. This is a matter of achieving merit for each one of us individually, and you'd not bother him." When Sand-monk heard these words, he asked, "Elder Brother, is he really a dragon?" "Yes," replied Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, I've heard an ancient saying that a dragon can breathe out clouds and mists, kick up dust and dirt, and he even has the ability to leap over mountains and peaks, the divine power to stir up rivers and seas. How is it that he is walking so slowly at the moment?" "You want him to move swiftly?" said Pilgrim. "I'll make him do that, look!" *Dear Great Sage!* He shook his golden-hooped rod once and there were 10000 shafts of colourful lights! When that horse saw the rod, he was so afraid that he might be struck by it that he moved his four legs like lightning and darted away. As his hands were weak, the master could not restrain the horse from this display of its mean nature. The horse ran all the way up a mountain cliff before slowing down to a trot. The master finally caught his breath and that was when he discovered in the distance several stately buildings beneath some pine trees. He saw *doors draped by hanging cedars: houses beside a green hill; pine trees fresh and straight and some poles of mottled bamboo. By the fence wild chrysanthemums glow with the frost: by the bridge orchid reflections redden the stream. Walls of white plaster; and fences brick-laid. A great hall, how noble and august: a tall house, so peaceful and clean. No oxen or sheep are seen, nor hens or dogs. After autumn's harvest farm chores must be light.* As the master held on to the saddle and slowly surveyed the scenery, Wukong and his brothers arrived. "Master," said Wukong, "you didn't fall off the horse?" "You brazen ape!" scolded the elder. "You're the one who frightened the horse! It's a good thing I managed to stay on him!" Attempting to placate him with a smile, Pilgrim said, "Master, please don't scold me. It all began when Bullseye 8 Rules said that the horse was moving too slowly: so I made him hurry a little." Because he tried to catch up with the horse, Idiot ran till he was all out of breath, mumbling to himself, "I'm done, done! Look at this belly of mine, and the slack torso! Already the pole is so heavy that I can hardly carry it. Now I'm given the additional bustle and toil of running after this horse!" "Disciples," said the elder, "look over there. There's a small village where we may perhaps ask for lodging." When Pilgrim heard these words, he looked up and saw that it was covered by auspicious clouds and hallowed mists. He knew then that this place had to be a creation of Gods or mortals but he dared not reveal the Heavenly secret. He only said, "Fine! Fine! Let's go ask for shelter." Quickly dismounting, the elder discovered that the towered entrance gate was decorated with carved lotus designs and looped slits in the woodwork; its pillars were carved and its beams gilded. Sand-monk put down the luggage while 8 Rules led the horse, saying, "This must be a family of considerable wealth!" Pilgrim would have gone in at once but Tripitaka said, "No, you and I are priests, and we'd behave with circumspection. Don't ever enter a house without permission. Let's wait until someone comes out, and then we may request lodging politely." 8 Rules tied up the horse and sat down, leaning against the wall. Tripitaka sat on one of the stone drums while Pilgrim and Sand-monk seated themselves at the foot of the gate. They waited for a long time but no one came out. Impatient by nature, Pilgrim leaped up after a while and ran inside the gate to have a look. There were in fact three large halls facing south, each with its curtains drawn up highly. Above the door screen hung a horizontal scroll painting with motifs of long life and rich blessings. And pasted on the gold lacquered pillars on either side was this New Year couplet written on bright red paper: *Frail willows float like gossamer, the low bridge at dusk:*

*Snow dots the fragrant plums, a small yard in the spring.*

In the centre hall, there was a small black lacquered table, its lustre half gone, bearing an old bronze urn in the shape of a beast. There were 6 straight-backed chairs in the main hall while hanging screens were mounted on the walls east and west just below the roof. As Pilgrim was glancing at all this furtively, the sound of footsteps suddenly came from behind the door to the rear, and out walked a middle-aged woman who asked in a seductive voice, "Who are you that you dare enter a widow's home without permission?" The Great Sage was so taken aback that he could only murmur his reply: "This humble monk came from the Great Tang in the Land of the East, having received the royal decree to seek scriptures from God in the West. There are four of us altogether. As we reached your noble region, it became late, and we therefore approached the sacred abode of the old Nun to seek shelter for the night." Smiling amiably, the woman said, "Elder where are your other three companions? Please invite them to come in."

"Master," shouted Pilgrim in a loud voice, "you're invited to come in." Only then did Tripitaka enter with 8 Rules and Sand-monk who was leading the horse and carrying the luggage as well. The woman walked out of the hall to greet them where she was met by the furtive, wanton glances of 8 Rules. *She wore a gown of mandarin green and silk brocade, topped by a light pink vest to which was fastened a light yellow embroidered skirt; her high-heeled, patterned shoes glinted beneath. A black lace covered her stylish coiffure, nicely matching the twin-coloured braids like dragons coiled. Her ivory palace-comb, gleaming red and halcyon-blue, supported 2 gold hair-pins set aslant. Her half-grey tresses swept up like phoenix wings; dangling earrings had rows of precious pearls. Still lovely even without powder or rouge, she had charm and beauty like one fair youth.* When the woman saw the three of them, she became even more amiable and invited them with great politeness into the main hall. After they had exchanged greetings one after the other, the pilgrims were told to be seated for tea to be served. From behind the screen a young maid with two tufts of flowing locks appeared, holding a golden tray with several white-jade cups. There were *fragrant tea wafting warm air, strange fruits spreading fine aroma.* That lady rolled up her colourful sleeves and revealed long, delicate fingers like the stalks of spring onions; holding high the jade cups, she passed the tea to each one of them, saluting as she made the presentation. After the tea, she gave instructions for vegetarian food to be prepared. "Old Nun," said Tripitaka saluting, "what's your noble surname? And what's the name of your esteemed region?"

The woman said, "This belongs to the West Aparagodāṇīya Continent. My maiden surname is Jia (Unreal), and the surname of my husband's family is Mo (non-existent). Unfortunately, my in-laws died prematurely, and my husband and I inherited our ancestral fortune that amounted to more than ten thousand taels of silver and over fifteen thousand acres of prime land. It was fated however, that we'd have no son, having given birth only to three daughters. The year before last, it was my great misfortune to lose my husband also, and I was left a widow. This year my mourning period is completed but we've no other relatives beside mum and daughters to inherit our vast property and land. I'd have liked to marry again but I find it difficult to give up such wealth. We're delighted, therefore, that the four of you've arrived, for we four, mum and daughters, would like very much to ask you to become our spouses. I don't know what you'll think of this proposal."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he turned deaf and dumb; shutting his eyes to quiet his mind, he fell silent and gave no reply. The woman said, "We own over three hundred acres of paddies, over four hundred and sixty acres of dried fields, and over four hundred and sixty acres of orchards and forests. We've over a thousand head of yellow water buffalo, herds of mules and horses, countless goats and sheep. In all four quarters, there are over seventy barns and haystacks. In this household there is grain enough to feed you for more than eight or nine years, silk that you'd not wear out in a decade, gold and silver that you might spend for a lifetime. What could be more delightful than our silk sheets and curtains that can render spring eternal? Not to mention those who wear golden hairpins standing in rows! If all of you, master and disciples, are willing to change your minds and enter the family of your wives, you'll be most comfortable, having all these riches to enjoy. Will that not be better than the toil of the journey to the West?" Like a mute and stupid person, Tripitaka refused to utter a word.

The woman said, "I was born in the hour of the Cock, on the third day of the third month, in the year Dinghai. As my deceased husband was three years my senior, I'm now forty-five years old. My eldest daughter, named Zhenzhen, is twenty; my second daughter, Aiai, is eighteen; and my youngest daughter, Lianlian, is sixteen.<sup>2</sup> None of them has been betrothed to anyone. Though I'm rather homely, my daughters fortunately are rather good-looking. Moreover, each of them is well trained in needlework and the feminine arts. And because we'd no son, my late husband brought them up as if they were boys, teaching them some of the Confucian classics when they were young as well as the art of writing verse and couplets. So, although they reside in a mountain home, they are not vulgar or uncouth persons; they would make suitable matches, I dare say, for all of you. If you elders can put away your inhibitions and let your hair grow again, you can at once become masters of this household. Are not the silk and brocade that you'll wear infinitely better than the porcelain alms-bowl and black robes, the straw sandals and grass hats?"

Sitting aloft in the seat of honour, Tripitaka was like a child struck by lightning, a frog smitten by rain. With eyes bulging and rolling upward, he could barely keep himself from keeling over in his chair. But 8 Rules, hearing of such wealth and such beauty, could hardly quell the unbearable itch in his heart! Sitting on his chair, he kept turning and twisting as if a needle were pricking him in the ass. Finally he could restrain himself no longer. Walking forward, he tugged at his master, saying, "Master! How can you completely ignore what the lady has been saying to you? You must try to pay some attention." Jerking back his head, the priest gave such a hostile shout that 8 Rules backed away hurriedly. "You cursed beast!" he bellowed. "We're people who have left home. How can we possibly allow ourselves anymore to be moved by riches and tempted by beauty?"

Giggling, the woman said, "Oh dear, dear! Tell me, what's so good about those who leave home?"

"Nun," said Tripitaka, "tell me what is so good about those of you who remain at home?"

"Please take a seat, elder," said the woman, "and let me tell you the benefits in the life of those of us who remain at home. If you ask what they're, this poem will make them abundantly clear. *When spring fashions appear I wear new silk; pleased to watch summer lilies I change to lace. Autumn brings fragrant rice-water newly brewed. In winter's heated rooms my face glows with juice. I may enjoy the fruits of all four climes and every dainty of eight seasons, too. The silk sheets and quilts of the bridal eve best the mendicant's life of Religious recites."*

Tripitaka said, "Nun, you who remain in the home can enjoy riches and glory; you've things to eat, clothes to wear, and children by your side. That is undeniably a good life but you don't know that there are some benefits in the life of those of us who have left home. If you ask what they are, this poem will make them abundantly clear. *The will to leave home is no common thing: you must tear down the old stronghold of love! No cares without, tongue and mouth are at peace; your inner body's good yin and yang. When merit's done, you face the Golden Arch and go hack, mind enlightened, to your Home. It beats the life of lust for household meat: you rot with age, one stinking bag of flesh!"*

When the woman heard these words, she grew terribly angry, saying, "How dare you to be so insolent, you brazen monk! If I'd had no regard for the fact that you've come from the Land of the East, I'd have sent you away at once. Now, I was trying to ask you with all sincerity, to enter our family and share our wealth, and you insult me instead. Even though you've received the commandments and made the vow never to return to secular life, at least one of your followers could become a member of our family. Why are you being so legalistic?"

Seeing how angry she had become, Tripitaka was intimidated and said, "Wukong, why don't you stay here." Pilgrim said, "I've been completely ignorant in such matters since the time I was young. Let 8 Rules stay."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "don't play tricks on people. Let's all have some further discussion."

"If neither of you is willing," said Tripitaka, "I'll ask Awakened to Purity to stay."

"Listen to the way Master is speaking!" said Sand-monk. "Since I was converted by the Nun and received the commandments from her, I've been waiting for you. It's been scarcely two months since you took me as your disciple and gave me your teachings and I've yet to acquire even half an inch of merit. You think I'd dare seek such riches! I'll journey to the Western Heaven even if it means my death! I'll never engage in such perfidious activities!"

When the woman saw them refusing to remain, she quickly walked behind the screen and slammed the door to the rear. Master and disciples were left outside, and no one came out again to present tea or rice. Exasperated, 8 Rules began to find fault with the Tang Monk, saying, "Master, you really don't know how to handle these matters! In fact, you've ruined all our chances by the way you spoke! You'd have been more flexible and given her a vague reply so that she would at least have given us a meal. We'd at least have enjoyed a pleasant evening and whether we'd be willing to stay tomorrow or not would have been for us to decide. Now the door's shut and no one is going to come out. How're we going to last through the night in the midst of these empty ashes and cold stoves?"

"Second Brother," said Awakened to Purity, "why don't you stay here and become her son-in-law?"

8 Rules said, "Brother, don't play tricks on people. Let's discuss the matter further."

"What's there to discuss?" said Pilgrim. "If you're willing, Master and that woman will become in-laws, and you'll be the son-in-law who lives in the girl's home. With such riches and such treasures in this family, you'll no doubt be given a huge dowry and a nice banquet to greet the kinsfolk that all of us can also enjoy. Your return to secular life here will in fact benefit both parties concerned."

"You can say that all right," said 8 Rules, "but for me it's a matter of fleeing the secular life only to return to secular life, of leaving my wife only to take another wife."

"So, Second Brother already has a wife?" said Sand-monk. "You didn't realise," Pilgrim said, "that originally he was the son-in-law of Mr. Gao of the Old Gao Village, in the Kingdom of Qoco. Since I defeated him, and since he had earlier received the commandments from the Nun, he had little choice but to follow the priestly vocation. That's the reason he abandoned his former wife to follow Master and to go worship God in the Western Heaven. I suppose he has felt the separation keenly and has been brooding on it for some time. Just now, when marriage was mentioned, he must have been sorely tempted. Idiot, why don't you become the son-in-law of this household? Just make sure that you make a few extra salutes to old monkey, and you'll not be reprimanded!"

"Nonsense! Nonsense!" said Idiot. "Each one of us is tempted but you only want Old bull to be embarrassed. The proverb says: *a monk's the deceased of sensuality* and which one of us can truly say that he doesn't want this? But you've to put on a show, and your histrionics have ruined a good thing. Now we can't even get a drop of tea or water, and no one is tending the lamps or fires. We may last through the night but I doubt that the horse can: he has to carry someone tomorrow and walk again, you know. If he goes hungry for a night, he might be reduced to a skeleton. You people sit here while Old bull goes to graze the horse." Hastily, Idiot untied the reins and pulled the horse outside. "Sand-monk," said Pilgrim, "you stay here and keep Master Company. I'll follow him and see where he is going to graze the horse."

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, "you may go and see where he's going but don't ridicule him."

"I know," said Pilgrim.

The Great Sage walked out of the main hall and with 1 shake of his body he changed into a red dragonfly. He flew out of the front gate and caught up with 8 Rules. Idiot pulled the horse out to where there was grass but he did not graze him there. Shouting and whooping, he chased the horse instead to the rear of the house where he found the woman standing outside the door with 3 girls enjoying the sight of some chrysanthemums. When mum and daughters saw 8 Rules approaching, the three girls slipped inside the house at once but the woman stood still beside the door and said, "Little elder, where're you going?"

Idiot threw away the reins and went up to greet her with a most friendly "Hello!" then he said, "Mama, I came to graze the horse."

"Your master's much too squeamish," said the woman. "If he took a wife in our family, he'd be much better off than being a mendicant trudging to the West, wouldn't he?"

"Well, they all have received the command of the Tang emperor," said 8 Rules with a laugh, "and they've not the courage to disobey the ruler's decree. That's why they're unwilling to do this thing. Just now they're all trying to play tricks on me in the front hall and I was somewhat embarrassed because I was afraid that Mama would find my long horn and large ears too offensive."

"I don't really," said the woman. "And since we've no master of the house, it's better to take one than none at all. But I do fear that my daughters may find you somewhat unattractive."

"Mama," said 8 Rules, "please instruct your noble daughters not to choose their men that way. Others may be more handsome but they usually turn out to be quite useless. Though I may be ugly, I do live by certain principles."

"And what are they?" asked the woman.

8 Rules replied, *"Though I may be somewhat ugly, I can work quite diligently. A thousand acres of land, you say? No need for oxen to plough it. I'll go over it once with my rake and the seeds will grow in season. When there's no rain I can make rain. When there's no wind I'll call for wind. If the house isn't tall enough, I'll build you a few stories more. If the grounds are not swept I'll give them a sweep. If the gutter's not drained I'll draw it for you. All things both great and small around the house I'm able to do most readily."*

"If you can work around the house," said the woman, "you'd discuss the matter again with your master. If there's no great inconvenience, we'll take you."

"No need for further discussion," said 8 Rules, "for he's no genuine parent of mine. Whether I want to do this or not is for me to decide."

"All right, all right," said the woman. "Let me talk to my girls first."

She slipped back inside immediately and slammed the rear door shut. 8 Rules did not graze the horse there either but led it back to the front. Little did he realise however, that Great Sage Sun had heard everything. With wings outstretched, the Great Sage flew back to see the Tang Monk, changing back into his original form. "Master," he said, "Aware of Ability is leading the horse back here."

"Of course he's leading the horse," said the Tang Monk, "for if he doesn't, it may run away in a fit of mischief." Pilgrim started to laugh and gave a thorough account of what the woman and 8 Rules had said but Tripitaka did not know whether to believe him or not. In a little while Idiot arrived and tied up the horse. "You've grazed him?" asked the elder.

"There's not much good grass around here," said 8 Rules, "so it's really no place to graze a horse."

"It may not be a place to graze the horse," said Pilgrim, "but it's a place to lead a horse?"<sup>3</sup>

When Idiot heard this question, he knew that his secret was known. He lowered his head and turned it to one side; with pouting lips and wrinkled brows, he remained silent for a long time. Just then, they heard the side door open with a creak, and out came a pair of red lanterns and a pair of portable incense burners. There were swirling clouds of fragrance and the sounds of tinkling girdle-jade when the woman walked out leading her three daughters. Zhenzhen, Aiai, Lianlian were told to salute the scripture pilgrims, and as they did so, standing in a row at the main hall, they appeared to be most beautiful indeed. Look at them! *Each moth-like eyebrow painted halcyon-blue: each pretty face aglow with spring-like hues. What beguiling, empire-shaking beauty! What ravishing, heart-jolting charm! Their filigreed headgears enhance their grace; silk sashes afloat, they seem wholly divine. Like ripe cherries their lips part, half-smiling as they walk slowly and spread their orchid-scent. Their heads full of pearls and jade atop countless hairpins slightly trembling. Their bodies full of delicate aroma, shrouded by exquisite robes of fine golden thread. Why speak of lovely ladies of the South or the good looks of Xizi?²⁴ They look like the fairy ladies descending from the 9-fold Heaven or the Princess Change leaving her Vast Cold Palace.* When he saw them, Tripitaka lowered his head and folded his hands in front of him while the Great Sage became mute and Sand-monk turned away completely. *But look at that Bullseye Eight Rules!* With eyes unblinking, a mind filled with lust, and passion fast rising, he murmured huskily, "What an honour it's to have the presence of you mortal ladies! Mama, please ask these dear sisters to leave."

The 3 girls went behind the screen leaving the pair of lanterns behind. The woman said, "Have you four elders made up your mind which one of you'll be betrothed to my daughters?"

"We've discussed the matter," said Awakened to Purity, "and we've decided that the one whose surname's Bullseye will enter your family."

"Brother," said 8 Rules, "please don't play any tricks on me. Let's discuss the matter further."

"What's there to discuss?" said Pilgrim. "You've already made all the arrangements with her at the back door, and even call her 'Mama.' What's there to discuss anymore? Master can be the in-law for the groom while this woman here will give away the bride; old monkey will be the witness, and Sand-monk the go-between. There's no need even to consult the almanac, for today happens to be the most auspicious and lucky day. You come here and salute Master, and then you can go inside and become her son-in-law."

"Nothing doing! Nothing doing!" said 8 Rules. "How can I engage in this kind of business?"

"Idiot!" said Pilgrim. "Stop this fakery! You've addressed her as 'Mama' for countless times already! What do you mean by 'nothing doing'? Agree to this at once, so that we may have the pleasure of enjoying some juice at the wedding." He caught hold of 8 Rules with one hand and pulled at the woman with the other, saying, "Mum-in-law, take your son-in-law inside." Somewhat hesitantly, Idiot started to shuffle inside while the woman gave instructions to a houseboy, saying, "Take out some tables and chairs and wipe them clean. Prepare a vegetarian dinner to serve these three relatives of ours. I'm leading our new master inside." She further gave instructions for the cook to begin preparation for a wedding banquet to be held the next morning. The houseboys then left to tell the cook. After the three pilgrims had eaten their meal, they retired to the guest rooms. 8 Rules followed his mum-in-law and walked inside. There were row upon row of doorways and chambers with tall thresholds, causing him constantly to stumble and fall. "Mama," said Idiot, "please walk more slowly. I'm not familiar with the way here so you must guide me a little."

The woman said, "These're all the storerooms, the treasures, the rooms where the flour is ground. We've yet to reach the kitchen."

"What a huge house!" said 8 Rules.

Stumbling along a winding course, he walked for a long time before finally reaching the inner chamber of the house. "Son-in-law," said the woman, "since your brother said that today's a most auspicious and lucky day, I've taken you in. In all this hurry, we've not had the chance of consulting an astrologer, nor been prepared for the proper wedding ceremony of worshiping Heaven and Earth and of spreading grains and fruits on the bridal bed. Right now, why don't you respect eight times toward the sky?"

"You're right, Mama," said 8 Rules. "You take the upper seat also, and let me salute you a few times. We'll consider that my worship of Heaven and Earth as well as my gesture of gratitude to you. Doing these two things at once will save me some trouble."

"All right, all right," said his mum-in-law, laughing. "You're indeed a son-in-law who knows how to fulfil your household duties with the least effort. I'll sit down and you can make your salutes."

The candles on silver candlesticks were shining brightly throughout the hall as Idiot gave his salutes. Afterwards he said, "Mama that one of the dear sisters do you plan to give me?"

"That's my dilemma," said his mum-in-law. "I was going to give you my eldest daughter but I was afraid of offending my second daughter. I was going to give you my second daughter but I was afraid then of offending my third daughter. And if I were to give you my third daughter, I fear that my eldest daughter may be offended. That's why I can't make up my mind."

"Mama," said 8 Rules, "if you want to prevent strife, why not give them all to me? That way, you'll spare yourself a lot of bickering that can destroy the harmony of the family."

"Nonsense!" said his mum-in-law. "You mean you alone want to take all three of my daughters?"

"Listen to what you're saying, Mama!" said 8 Rules. "Who doesn't have three or four concubines nowadays? Even if you've a few more daughters, I'll gladly take them all. When I was young, I learned how to be long-lasting in the arts of love. You can be assured that I'll render satisfactory service to every one of them."

"That's no good! That's no good!" said the woman. "I've a large handkerchief here with which you can cover your head, blindfold yourself, and determine your fated marriage that way. I'm going to ask my daughters to walk past you, and the one you can catch with your hands will be betrothed to you." Idiot accepted her suggestion and covered his head with his handkerchief. A testimonial poem says:

*The fool knows not the true causes of things; beauty's sword can in secret wound the self.*

*The Duke of Zhou of old had fixed the rites. But a bridegroom today still veils his head!*

After Idiot had tied himself up properly, he said, "Mum, ask the dear sisters to come out."

"Zhenzhen, Aiai, Lianlian," cried his mum-in-law, "you all come out and determine your fated marriage, so that one of you may be given to this man."

With the sounds of girdle-jade and the fragrance of orchids, it seemed that some mortal ladies had suddenly appeared. Idiot indeed stretched forth his hands to try to catch hold of one of the girls but though he darted about madly this way and that, he could not lay hands on anyone on either side of him. It seemed to him, to be sure, that the girls were making all kinds of movement around him but he could not grab a single one of them. He lunged toward the east and wrapped his arms around a pillar; he made a dive toward the west and slammed into a wooden partition. Growing faint from rushing about like that, he began to stumble and fall all over the place – tripping on the threshold in front of him, smashing into the brick wall behind him! Fumbling and tumbling around, he ended up sitting on the floor with a bruised head and a swollen mouth.

"Mama," he cried, panting heavily, "you've a bunch of slippery daughters! I can't catch a single one of them! What am I to do? What am I to do?" Taking off his blindfold, the woman said, "Son-in-law, it's not that my daughters are slippery; it's just that they are all very modest. Each defers to the other so that she may take you."

"If they are unwilling to take me, Mama," said 8 Rules, "why don't you take me instead?"

"Dear son-in-law," said the woman, "you really have no regard for age or youth, when you even want your mum-in-law! My three daughters are really quite talented, for each one of them has woven a silk undershirt studded with pearls. Try them on, and the one whose shirt fits you'll take you in."

"Fine! Fine! Fine!" said 8 Rules. "Bring out all three undershirts and let me try them on. If all fit me, they can all have me." The woman went inside and took out one undershirt that she handed over to 8 Rules. Taking off his blue silk shirt, Idiot took up the undergarment and draped it over his body at once. Before he had managed to tie the strings however, he suddenly fell to the floor. The undershirt had changed into several pieces of rope which had him tightly bound. As he lay there in unbearable pain, the women vanished.

We now tell you about Tripitaka, Pilgrim, and Sand-monk who woke up when it began to grow light in the East. As they opened their eyes, they discovered that all the noble halls and buildings had vanished. There were neither carved beams nor gilded pillars, for the truth of the matter was that they had all been sleeping in a forest of pines and cedars. In a panic, the elder began to shout for Pilgrim, and Sand-monk also cried, “Elder Brother, we’re finished! We’ve met some ghosts!” The Great Sage Sun however, realised fully what had happened. Smiling gently, he said, “What are you talking about?”

“Look where we’ve been sleeping!” cried the elder.

“It’s pleasant enough in this pine forest,” said Pilgrim, “but I wonder where that Idiot is going through his ordeal.”

“Who is going through an ordeal?” asked the elder.

Pilgrim answered with a laugh. “The women of that household happened to be some Nuns from somewhere who’d waited for us to teach us a lesson; they must’ve left during the night but unfortunately Bullseye Eight Rules’s to suffer.” When Tripitaka heard this, he quickly raised his hands to make a salute. Then they saw a slip of paper hanging on an old cedar tree, fluttering in the wind. Sand-monk quickly took it down for his master to read. On it was written the following 4-line poem:

*Though the old Dame of Li Shan<sup>5</sup> had no desire, Guanyin invited her to leave the mount.  
The Beautiful 1 with Glory and Auspiciousness and Auspicious-World, too were guests who took in the woods the form of maidens fair.  
The holy monk’s virtuous and truly chaste but 8 Rules’ profane, loving things mundane.  
Henceforth he must repent with quiet heart for if he’s slothful, the way will be hard.*

As the elder, Pilgrim, and Sand-monk recited this poem aloud, they heard a loud call from deep in the woods: “Master, the ropes are killing me! Save me, please! I’ll never dare do this again!”

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “is it Aware of Ability who is calling us?”

“Yes,” said Sand-monk. “Brother,” said Pilgrim, “don’t bother about him. Let us leave now.”

“Though Idiot is stupid and mischievous,” said Tripitaka, “he’s at least fairly honest and he’s arms strong enough to carry the luggage. Let’s have some regard for the Nun’s earlier intention, let’s rescue him so that he may continue to follow us. I doubt that he’ll ever dare do this again.” Sand-monk thereupon rolled up the bedding and put the luggage in order, after which Great Sage Sun untied the horse to lead the Tang Monk into the woods to see what had happened. *Ah!* So it is that *you must take care in the pursuit of truth to purge desires, and you’ll enter the Real.*

**024**

**At Long Life Mountain the Great Mortal detains his old friend; at 5 Villages Abbey, Pilgrim steals the ginseng fruit**

The 3 of them who on entering the forest, found Idiot tied to a tree. He was screaming continuously because of the unbearable pain. Pilgrim approached and said to him, laughing, “Dear son-in-law! It’s getting rather late, and you still haven’t got around to performing the proper ceremony of thanking your parents or announcing your marriage to Master. You’re still having a grand old time playing games here! Hey! Where’s your mama? Where’s your wife? What a dear son-in-law, all bound and beaten!” When Idiot heard such ridicule, he was so mortified that he clenched his teeth to try to endure the pain without making any more noise. Sand-monk however, could not bear to look at him; he put down the luggage and went forward to untie the ropes. After he was freed, Idiot could only drop to his knees and respect toward the sky, for he was filled with shame. For him we’ve as a testimony this lines to the poem of *Moon Over West River*:

*Eros’s a sword injurious: live by it and you’ll be slain.  
The lady so fair and lovely at 16’s more vicious than a Nature spirit!  
You’ve but one principal sum; you can’t add profit to your purse.  
Guard and keep well your precious capital that you mustn’t squander and waste.*

Scooping up some dirt and scattering it like incense, 8 Rules saluted to the sky. “Did you recognise those Nuns at all?” asked Pilgrim.

“I was in a stupor, about to faint,” replied 8 Rules. “How’d I recognise anyone?”

Pilgrim then handed him the slip of paper. When 8 Rules saw the *Verse*, he was more embarrassed than ever. “Second Brother’s all the luck,” said Sand-monk with a laugh, “for you’ve attracted these four nuns here to become your wives!”

“Brother,” said 8 Rules, “let’s not ever mention that again! It’s blasphemy! From now on, I’ll never dare do such foolish things again. Even if it breaks my bones, I’ll carry the pole and luggage to follow Master to the West.”

“You’re finally speaking sensibly,” said Tripitaka.

Pilgrim then led his master up the main road, and after journeying for a long time, they suddenly came upon a tall mountain. Pulling in the reins, Tripitaka said, “Disciples, let’s be careful as we travel up this mountain before us, for there may be monsters seeking to harm us.”

“Ahead of your horse you’ve the three of us,” said Pilgrim. “Why fear the monsters?”

Reassured by these words, the elder proceeded. That mountain is truly a magnificent mountain: *a tall mountain most rugged, its shape both lofty and grand. Its root joins the Kunlun<sup>2</sup> ranges; top reaches to the sky. White cranes come often to perch on junipers; black apes hang frequently on the vines. As the sun lights up the forest, strands upon strands of red mist are circling; as wind rises from dark gorges, 10000 pink cloud pieces soar and fly. Hidden birds recite madly in green bamboos; pheasants do battle amidst wildflowers. You see those Millennium, 5-Blessings,<sup>3</sup> and the Hibiscus Peak – they all glow and shimmer most awesomely; those Ageless, Tiger-Tooth Rock, and 3-Heaven Rock – where auspicious air rises endlessly. Below the cliff, delicate grass; atop the ridge, fragrant plum. The thoms and briars are thick; the orchids are pale and pure. The deep woods’ phoenix musters 1000 fowls; an old cave’s unicorn rules countless beasts. Even the brook seems caring: she twists and turns as if looking back. The peaks are continuous: row upon row circling all around. You also see those green locust trees,<sup>4</sup> mottled bamboos, and verdant pines – rivals ever fresh in their dense lushness; those pears milk-white, peaches red, and willows green – all competing in their Triple-Spring hues. Dragons recite and tigers roar; the cranes exercise and the apes wail; the musk deer from flowers walk out; the phoenix cries facing the sun. It’s a mount divine, land of true blessings, the same as Penglai, wondrous fairy land. See those flowers blooming and dying – this mountain scene where clouds draw near or leave the soaring peaks. With great delight, Tripitaka said as he rode along, “Disciples, since I began this journey to the West, I’ve passed through many regions, all rather treacherous and difficult to traverse. None of the other places has scenery like this mountain that’s extraordinarily beautiful. Perhaps we’re not far from Thunderclap and if so, we’d prepare in a dignified and solemn manner to meet the World’s Honoured One.”*

“It’s early, much too early!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “We’re nowhere near!”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “how far it’s for us to reach Thunderclap?”

“A hundred and eight thousand miles,” said Pilgrim, “and we’ve not even covered one-tenth of the distance.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “how many years do we’ve to travel before we get there?”

“If we’re talking about you two, my worthy brothers,” said Pilgrim, “this journey would take some ten days. If we’re talking about me, I’d probably make about fifty round trips in a day and there would still be sunlight. But if we’re talking about Master, then don’t even think about it!”

“Wukong,” said the Tang Monk, “tell us when we’ll be able to reach our destination.”

Pilgrim said, “You can walk from the time of your youth till the time you grow old, and after that, till you become youthful again; and even after going through such a cycle a thousand times, you may still find it difficult to reach the place you want to go to. But when you perceive, by the resoluteness of your will, a god-nature in all things, and when every one of your thoughts goes back to its very source in your memory, that will be the time you arrive at the Spirit Mountain.”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “even though this is not the region of Thunderclap, a place of such scenic splendour must be the residence of a good man.”

“That’s an appropriate observation,” said Pilgrim, “for this can hardly be a place for demons or goblins; rather, it must be the home of a holy monk or a mortal. We can walk leisurely and enjoy the scenery.”

The mountain had the name of the Long Life Mountain. In the mountain there was a Daoist Abbey called the 5 Villages Abbey; it was the abode of a mortal whose Daoist style was Master Zhenyuan<sup>5</sup> and whose nickname was Lord, Equal to Earth. There was moreover a strange treasure grown in this temple, a spiritual root that was formed just after chaos had been parted and the nebula had been established prior to the division of Heaven and Earth. Throughout the four great continents of the world, it could be found in only the Five Villages Abbey in the West Aparagodānīya Continent. This treasure was called grass of the reverted cinnabar,<sup>6</sup> or the ginseng fruit. It took three millennia for the plant to bloom, another three millennia to bear fruit, and still another three millennia before they ripened. Overall, it would be nearly ten millennia before they could be eaten, and even after such a long time, there would be only thirty such fruits. The shape of the fruit was exactly that of a new-born infant not yet three days old, complete with the four limbs and the five senses. If a man had the good fortune of even smelling the fruit, he would live for three hundred and sixty years; if he ate one, he would reach his forty-seven thousandth year.

That day, the Great Zhenyua mortal happened to have received a card from the Celestial Worthy of Original Commencement who invited him to the Miluo Palace in the Heaven of Highest Clarity to listen to the discourse on “The Daoist Fruit of the Chaotic Origin.” That Great Mortal had already trained countless disciples to become mortals; even now he had with him some forty-eight disciples, all Daoists of the Quanzhen Order who had acquired the Way. When he went up to the region above to listen to the lecture that day, he took forty-six disciples along with him, leaving behind two of the youngest ones to look after the temple. One was called Clear Breeze, and the other was named Bright Moon. Clear Breeze was only one thousand two hundred and twenty years old while Bright Moon had just passed his one thousand two hundredth birthday. Before his departure, Master Zhenyuan gave instructions to the two young lads, saying, “I can’t refuse the invitation of the Great Honourable Divine, and I’m leaving for the Miluo Palace to attend a lecture. You two must be watchful, for an old friend of mine will be passing by here any day. Don’t fail to treat him kindly: you may in fact strike down from the tree two of the ginseng fruits for him to eat as a token of our past friendship.”

“Who is this friend of yours, Master?” asked one of the lads. “Tell us, so that we may take good care of him.”

“He is a holy monk serving the Great Tang Emperor in the land of the East,” said the Great Mortal, “and his religious name is Tripitaka. He is now on his way to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures from God.”

“According to Confucius,” said 1 of the lads, laughing, “*One doesn’t take counsel with those who follow a different Way.*”<sup>7</sup> We belong to the Mysterious Fold of the Great Monad. Why’d we associate with a Religious monk?”

“You’d know,” said the Great Mortal, “that that monk happens to be the incarnate Gold Cicada, the second disciple of Siddhartha, the Aged Sage of the West. Five centuries ago, I became acquainted with him during the Feast of the Ullambana Bowl when he presented me tea with his own hands as the various sons of God paid me their respect. That’s why I consider him an old friend.” When the two mortal lads heard these words, they accepted them as the instruction of their master. As the Great Mortal was about to leave, he cautioned them again, saying, “Those fruits of mine are all numbered. You may give him two but no more.”

“When the garden’s opened to the public,” said Clear Breeze, “we shared and ate two of the fruits; there’d be still twenty-eight of them on the tree. We’d think of using no more than you’ve told us to.”

The Great Mortal said, “I fear though Tripitaka Tang’s an old friend, his disciples may be somewhat rowdy. It’s best not to let them know about the fruits.”

After he had finished giving these instructions to the 2 lads, the Great Mortal ascended to the region of Heaven with all his disciples. The Tang Monk and his 3 companions were making a tour of the mountain. Looking up, they suddenly discovered several tall buildings by a cluster of pines and bamboos. “Wukong,” said the Tang Monk, “what sort of place do you think that is over there?”

After taking a look at it, Pilgrim said, “It’s either a Daoist abbey or a Religious monastery. Let’s move along and we’ll find out more about it when we get there.” They soon arrived at the gate and saw *a pine knoll cool and serene; a bamboo path dark and secluded; white cranes coming and leaving with clouds afloat; and apes climbing up and down to hand out fruits. Before the gate, the pond’s wide and trees cast long shadows; the rocks crack, breaking the moss’s growth. Palatial halls dark and tall as the purple Heaven; and towers aloft from which bright red mists descend. Truly a blessed region, a spiritual place like the cloudy cave of Penglai: quiet, untouched by the affairs of man; tranquil, fit to nurse the mind of Dao. Bluebirds may bring at times a Queen Mum’s note; a phoenix oft arrives with a Laozi scroll. There’s no end to the sight of this noble Daoist scene: it’s the spacious home of mortals indeed!* As the Tang Monk dismounted, he saw on the left a huge stone tablet on which the following inscription was written in large letters:

*The Blessed Land of the Long Life Mountain. The Cave Heaven of the 5 Villages Abbey.*

“Disciples,” said the Elder, “it’s indeed a Daoist abbey.”

“Master,” said Sand-monk, “with such splendid scenery, there must be a good man living in this temple. Let us go in and take a look. When we return to the East after completing our merits, this may be the place for another visit because of its marvellous scenery.”

“Well spoken,” said Pilgrim, and they all went inside. On both sides of the 2<sup>nd</sup> gate they saw this New Year couplet:

Long-living and ever young, this mortal house.

Of the same age as Heaven, this Daoist home.

Pilgrim said with a snicker, “This Daoist’s mouthing big words just to intimidate people! When I, old monkey, caused disturbance in the Heavenly Palace five centuries ago, I didn’t encounter such words even on the door of Laozi!”

“Never mind him!” said 8 Rules. “Let’s go inside! Let’s go inside! You never know, maybe this Daoist does possess some virtuous accomplishment.”

When they passed through the second gate, they were met by 2 young lads who were hurrying out. Look how they appear: *healthy in bone and spirit with visage fair, on their heads were short bundled tufts of hair. Their Daoist gowns, free falling, seemed wrapped in mists; feathered robes, more quaint, for the wind-blown sleeves. Dragon-heads had their sashes knotted tight; silk cords laced lightly their sandals of straw. Such uncommon looks were of no worldly-born; they were Clear Breeze and Bright Moon, 2 lads divine.* The 2 young lads came out to meet them, saluting and saying, “Old master, forgive us for not coming to meet you. Please take a seat.”

Delighted, the elder followed the two lads to the main hall to look around. There were altogether 5 huge chambers facing south separated by floor-length windows that had carved panes and were translucent at the top and solid at the bottom. Pushing open 1 of these, the 2 mortal lads invited the Tang Monk into the central chamber with a panel hanging on the middle wall on which 2 large characters – “Heaven, Earth” – were embroidered in five colours. Beneath the panel was a cinnabar-red lacquered incense table on which there was an urn of yellow gold. Conveniently placed beside the urn were several sticks of incense.

The Tang Monk went forward and with his left hand, took up some incense to put into the urn. He then saluted himself three times before the table, after which he turned around and said, “Mortal lads, your Five Villages Abbey is in truth a godly region of the West. But why’s it that you don’t worship the Three Pure Ones, thearchs of Four Quarters, or the many Lords of High Heaven? Why is it that you merely put up these two words of Heaven and Earth to receive the oblation of fire and incense?” Smiling, one of the lads said, “To tell you the truth, Master, putting these two words up is an act of flattery on the part of our teacher, for of these two words, the one on top,<sup>8</sup> may deserve our reverence but the one below is hardly worthy of our fire and incense.”

“What do you mean by an act of flattery?” asked Tripitaka. The lad replied, “The Three Pure Ones are friends of our teacher; the Four Thearchs, his old acquaintances; the Nine Luminaries, his junior colleagues; and a god of the New Year, his unwanted guest!”

When Pilgrim heard this remark, he laughed so hard that he could barely stand up. “Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “why are you laughing?”

“Talk about the shenanigans of old monkey!” said Pilgrim. “Just listen to the flimflam of this Daoist kid!”

“Where is your honourable teacher?” asked Tripitaka. “Our teacher,” said the lad, “had been invited by the Honourable Divine of the Origin to attend a lecture on ‘The Daoist Fruit of the Chaotic Origin’ at the Miluo Palace in the Heaven of Highest Clarity. He’s not home.”

No longer able to restrain himself after hearing these words, Pilgrim shouted: “You stinking young Daoists! You can’t even recognise people! Whom you’re trying to hoodwink? What kind of Tara-diddle is this? Who is that Heavenly Mortal in the Miluo Palace who wanted to invite this wild bull shank of yours? And what sort of lecture is he going to give?” When Tripitaka saw how aroused Pilgrim was, he feared that the lads might give some reply that would lead to real trouble. So he said, “Wukong, stop being quarrelsome. If we leave this place the moment after we arrive, it is hardly a friendly gesture. The proverb says, ‘The egrets do not devour the egret’s flesh.’ If their teacher is not here, why bother them? You go to graze the horse outside the temple gate; let Sand-monk look after the luggage and 8 Rules fetch some grain from our bags. Let’s borrow their pans and stove to prepare a meal for ourselves. When we’re done, we can pay them a few pennies for firewood and that will be the end of the matter. Attend to your business, each of you, and let me rest here for a while. After the meal, we’ll leave.”

The 3 of them duly went about their business. Clear Breeze and Bright Moon filled with admiration, said softly to each other: “What a monk! Truly the disciple of a lovable sage of the West whose true origin is not at all obscured! Well, our master told us to take care of the Tang Monk and to serve him some ginseng fruits as a token of past friendship. He also cautioned us about the rowdiness of his disciples and he’d not have been more correct. It’s a good thing that those three so fierce in their looks and so churlish in their manners, were sent away. For had they remained, they would certainly have to see the ginseng fruits.”

Then Clear Breeze said, “Brother, we’re still not quite certain whether that monk is really an old acquaintance of Master. We’d better ask him and not make a mistake.”

The 2 lads therefore went forward again and said, “May we ask the old master whether he is Tripitaka Tang from the Great Tang Empire who is on his way to fetch scriptures from the Western Heaven?”

Returning their salutes, the elder said, “I’m, indeed. How is it that the mortal youths know my vulgar name?”

“Before our master’s departure,” said one of them, “he gave us instructions that we’d go some distance to meet you. We didn’t expect your arrival to be so soon, and thus we failed in the proper etiquette of greeting you. Please take a seat, Master, and allow us to serve you tea.”

“I hardly deserve that,” said Tripitaka but Bright Moon went quickly back to his room and brought back a cup of fragrant tea to present to the elder. After Tripitaka had drunk the tea, Clear Breeze said, “Brother, we must not disobey our master’s command. Let’s go and bring back the fruit.”

The two lads took leave of Tripitaka and went back to their room where one of them took out a gold mallet and the other a wooden tray for carrying elixir. They also spread out several silk handkerchiefs on the tray before going to the Ginseng Garden. Clear Breeze then climbed on the tree to strike at the fruits with the mallet while Bright Moon waited below, holding the tray. In a moment, two of the fruits dropped down and fell onto the tray. The young lads returned to the main hall and presented the fruits to the Tang Monk, saying, “Master Tang, our Five Villages Abbey is situated in the midst of wild and desolate country. There’s not much that we can offer you except these two fruits, our local products. Please use them to relieve your thirst.” When the elder saw the fruits, he trembled all over and backed away three feet, saying, “Goodness! Goodness! The harvest seems to be plentiful this year! But why is this abbey so destitute that they have to practice cannibalism here? These’re new-born infants not yet three days old! How could you serve them to me to relieve my thirst?”

“This monk,” said Clear Breeze quietly to himself, “has been so corrupted by the fields of mouths and tongues, by the sea of strife and envy, that all he possesses are but two fleshly eyes and a worldly mind. That’s why he can’t recognise the strange treasures of our divine abode!” Bright Moon then drew near and said, “Master, this thing is called ginseng fruit. It’s perfectly all right for you to eat one.”

“Nonsense! Nonsense!” said Tripitaka. “Their parents went through who knows how much suffering before they brought them to birth! How could you serve them as fruits when they are less than three days old?” Clear Breeze said, “Honestly, they were formed on a tree.”

“Rubbish! Rubbish!” said the elder. “How can people grow on trees? Take them away! This is blasphemy!” When the young lads saw that he absolutely refused to eat them, they had no choice but to take the tray back to their own room. The fruit is peculiar: if it is kept too long, it will become stiff and inedible. So, when the two of them reached their room, they each took one of the fruits and began to eat them, sitting on the edge of their beds.

Alas, now this is what has to happen! That chamber of theirs was immediately adjacent to the kitchen; joined in fact by a common wall. Even the whispered words from one room could be heard in the other, and 8 Rules was busily cooking rice in the kitchen. All that talk, moments before, about taking the golden mallet and the elixir tray had already caught his attention. Then, when he heard how the Tang Monk could not recognise ginseng fruits that were served him, and how they had to be eaten by the young lads in their own room, he could not stop his mouth-watering, and said to himself, “How can I try one myself?” Since he himself was reluctant to do anything, he decided to wait for Pilgrim’s arrival so that they could plan something together. Completely distracted by now from tending the fire in the stove, he kept sticking his head out of the door to watch for Pilgrim. In a little while, he saw Pilgrim arrive, leading the horse. Having tied the horse to a locust tree, Pilgrim started to walk toward the rear, when Idiot waved to him madly with his hands, crying, “Come this way! Come this way!” Pilgrim turned around and went to the door of the kitchen, saying, “Idiot, why are you yelling? Not enough rice, perhaps? Let the old monk have his fill first, and we can beg more rice from some big household along our way.”

“Come in,” said 8 Rules. “This has nothing to do with the amount of rice we’ve. There’s a treasure in this Daoist temple. Did you know that?”

“What kind of treasure?” asked Pilgrim.

“I can tell you,” said 8 Rules with a laugh, “but you’ve never seen it; I can put it before you but you’ll not recognise it.”

“You must be joking. Idiot,” said Pilgrim. “Five centuries ago, when I, old monkey, searched for the Way of Mortality, I went all the way to the corner of the ocean and the edge of the sky. What can there be that I’ve never seen?”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “have you ever seen the ginseng fruit?” Somewhat startled, Pilgrim said, “That I really have never seen! But I’ve heard that ginseng fruit is the grass of the reverted cinnabar. When a man eats it, his life will be prolonged. But where can one get a-hold of it?”

“They have it here,” said 8 Rules. “The two lads brought two of these fruits for Master to eat but that old monk could not recognise them for what they were. He said that they were infants not yet three days old and dared not eat them. The lads themselves were quite disobliging; if Master would not eat, they should have given them to us. Instead, they hid them from us. Just now in the room next door, each had a fruit to himself and finished it with great relish. I got so excited that I was drooling, wondering how I’d have a taste of this fruit. I know you’re quite tricky. How about going to their garden and stealing a few for us to have a taste of them?”

“That’s easy,” said Pilgrim. “Old monkey will go, and they will be at the reach of his hands!” He turned quickly and began to walk to the front. 8 Rules caught hold of him and said, “Elder Brother, I heard them talking in the room, and they mentioned something about using a gold mallet to knock down the fruits. You must do it properly, and without being detected.”

“I know! I know!” exclaimed Pilgrim.

Great Sage used the magic of body concealment and stole into the Daoist chamber. The 2 Daoist lads were not in the room, for they had gone back to the main hall to speak to the Tang Monk after they had finished eating the fruits. Pilgrim looked everywhere for the gold mallet and discovered a stick of red gold hanging on the window pane: it was about 2 feet long and as thick as a finger. At the lower end there was a knob about the size of a clove of garlic while the upper end had a hole through which a green woollen thread was fastened. He said to himself: “This must be the thing called the gold mallet.” Taking it down, he left the Daoist chamber, went to the rear, and pushed through a double-leaf door to have a look. *Ah, it’s a garden! See vermilion fences and carved railings; artificial hills ruggedly built. Strange flowers rival the sun in brightness; bamboos match well the clear sky in blueness. Beyond the flowing-cup pavilion, 1 curved band of willows like mists outspread; before the moon-gazing terrace, bands of choice pines like spilled indigo. Shining red, pomegranates with brocade-like sacs; fresh, tender green, grass by the ornamental stools; luxuriant blue, sand-orchids like jade; limpid and smooth, the water in the brook. The cassia glows with the Wutong by the golden well; the locust trees stand near the red fences and marble steps. Some red and some white: peaches with 1000 leaves; some fragrant and some yellow: chrysanthemums of late fall. The rush-flower supports complement the peony pavilion; the hibiscus terrace connects with the peony plot. There are countless princely bamboos that mock the frost and noble pines that defy the snow. There are moreover crane hamlets and deer homes, the square pool and the round pond. The stream spills chips of jade; the ground sprouts mounds of gold. The winter wind cracks and whitens the plum blossoms; a touch of spring breaks open the begonia’s red. Truly it may be called the best fairy land on Earth, the finest floral site of the West.* Pilgrim could not take his eyes off this marvellous place. He came upon another door that he pushed open and found inside a vegetable garden *planted with the herbs of all 4 seasons: spinach, celery, mare’s tail,<sup>10</sup> beet, ginger, and seaweed; bamboo shoot, melon, squash, and watercress; chive, garlic, coriander, leek, and scallion; hollow water-lotus, young celery, and bitter Su;* <sup>11</sup>*the gourd and the eggplant that must be trimmed; green turnip, white turnip, and taro deep in the earth; red spinach, green cabbage, and purple mustard plant.* <sup>12</sup>Pilgrim smiled to himself and said, “So he’s a Daoist who eats his home-grown food!”

He walked past the vegetable garden and found another door that he pushed open also. Ah! There was a huge tree right in the middle of the garden with long, healthy branches and luxuriant green leaves that somewhat resembled those of the plantain. Soaring straight up, the tree was over a thousand feet tall, and its base must have measured sixty or seventy feet around. Leaning on the tree, Pilgrim looked up and found one ginseng fruit sticking out on one of the branches pointing southward. It certainly had the appearance of an infant with a tail-like peduncle. Look at it dangling from the end of the branch with limbs moving wildly and head bobbing madly! It seemed to make sounds as it swung in the breeze. Filled with admiration and delight, Pilgrim said to himself, “What a marvellous thing! It’s rarely seen! It’s rarely seen!” With a swish, he vaulted up the tree.

The monkey was an expert in climbing trees and stealing fruits. He took the gold mallet and struck lightly at the fruit that dropped at once from the branch. Pilgrim leaped down after it but the fruit was nowhere to be seen. Though he searched for it all over the grass, there was not a trace of it. “Strange! Strange!” said Pilgrim. “I suppose it could walk with its legs but even so, it could hardly have jumped across the wall. I know! It must be the local spirit of this garden who will not allow me to steal the fruit; he must have taken it.” Making the magic sign and reciting a spell that began with the letter *om*, he summoned the local spirit of the garden who came saluting Pilgrim and said, “Great Sage, what sort of instructions do you’ve for this humble deity?”

“Don’t you know,” said Pilgrim, “that old monkey happens to be the world’s most famous thief? When I stole the mortal peaches, the imperial juice, and the efficacious pills that year, there was no one brave enough to share the spoils with me. How is it, therefore, when I steal just one of their fruits today, that you’ve the gall to snatch away the prime portion? Since these fruits are formed on a tree, I suppose even the fowls of the air may partake of them. What’s wrong with my eating one of them? How dare you grab it the moment I knock it down?”

“Great Sage,” said the local spirit, “you’ve made a mistake in blaming me. This treasure’s something that belongs to an earthbound mortal whereas I’m only a ghost mortal. <sup>13</sup>Would I dare take it? I don’t even have the good fortune to smell it!”

“If you hadn’t snatched it,” said Pilgrim, “why did it disappear the moment it fell?”

“You may know only about its power to prolong life, Great Sage,” said the local spirit, “but you don’t know its background.”



"What do you mean by background?" said Pilgrim.

"This treasure," said the local spirit, "will bloom only once in three millennia; it will bear fruit after another three millennia; and the fruit won't ripen for yet another three millennia. Overall, one must wait for almost ten millennia before there are thirty of these fruits. A person lucky enough to smell it once will live for three hundred and sixty years; if he eats one, he will live for forty-seven millennia. However, the fruit is resistant to the Five Phases."

"What do you mean by resistant to the Five Phases?" asked Pilgrim. The local spirit replied, "This fruit will fall when it encounters gold; it will wither when it encounters wood; it will melt when it encounters water; it will dry up if it encounters fire; and it will be assimilated if it encounters earth. That is why one has to use an instrument of gold to knock it down but when it falls, it has to be held by a tray cushioned with silk handkerchiefs. The moment it touches wood, it will wither and will not prolong life even if it's eaten. When it is eaten, it should be held in a porcelain container and should be dissolved with water. Again, fire will dry it up and it will be useless. Finally, what is meant by its assimilation into earth may be illustrated by what happened just now, for when you knocked it down, it at once crawled into the ground. This part of the garden will last for at least forty-seven millennia. Even a steel pick will be unable to bore through it, for it is three or four times harder than raw iron. That is why a man will live long if he eats one of the fruits. If you don't believe me, Great Sage, strike at the ground and see for yourself." Whipping out his golden-hooped rod, Pilgrim gave the ground a terrific blow. The rod rebounded at once but there was not the slightest mark on the ground. "Indeed! Indeed!" said Pilgrim. "This rod of mine can turn a boulder into powder; it will leave its mark even on raw iron. How is it that there's not even a scratch on the ground? Well, in that case, I've made a mistake in blaming you. You may go back."<sup>14</sup> The local spirit thus went back to his own shrine.

The Great Sage however, had his own plan: after climbing up on the tree, he held the golden mallet in one hand and with the other, pulled up the front of his silk shirt to make a little sack. Parting the leaves and branches, he knocked three of the fruits into the sack. He jumped down from the tree and ran straight to the kitchen. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules smiling, "do you've them?"

"Aren't these the ones?" said Pilgrim. "I reached and took, that's all! But we'd not let Sand-monk pass up the chance of tasting this fruit. You call him." 8 Rules waved his hands and cried, "Awakened to Purity, come!" Setting down the luggage, Sand-monk ran into the kitchen and said, "Elder Brother, why did you call me?"

Opening the sack, Pilgrim said, "Brother, take a look. What're these?"

When Sand-monk saw them, he said, "Ginseng fruits."

"Fine!" said Pilgrim. "So, you recognise them! Where did you taste them before?"

"I've never tasted the fruit before," said Sand-monk. "But when I was the Curtain-Raising Captain, I waited on the Throne to attend the Festival of Mortal Peaches, and I once saw many mortals from beyond the sea presenting this fruit to the Lady Queen Mum as a birthday gift. So I've seen it but I've never tasted it. Elder Brother, will you let me try a little?"

"No need to say anymore," said Pilgrim. "There's one for each of us brothers."

The three of them took the fruits and began to enjoy them. That 8 Rules, of course, had a huge appetite and a huge mouth. When he heard the conversation of the young lads earlier, he already felt ravenous. The moment he saw the fruit, therefore, he grabbed it and with one gulp, swallowed it whole. Then he rolled up his eyes and said in a roguish manner to Pilgrim and Sand-monk, "What are you two eating?"

"Ginseng fruit," said Sand-monk. "How does it taste?" asked 8 Rules. "Awakened to Purity," said Pilgrim, "don't listen to him. He ate it first. Why all these questions now?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "I ate it somewhat too hurriedly, not as the two of you're doing, mincing and munching little by little to discover its taste. I swallowed it without even knowing whether it had a pit or not! Elder Brother, if you're helping someone, help him to the end. You've roused the worms in my stomach! Please fetch me another fruit so that I can take time to enjoy it."

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "you really don't know when to stop! This thing here is not like rice or noodles, food to stuff yourself with. There are only thirty such fruits in ten millennia! It's our great fortune to have eaten one already, and you'd not regard this lightly. Stop now! It's enough." He stretched himself and threw the gold mallet into the adjacent room through a little hole on the window paper without saying anything more to 8 Rules.

Idiot however, kept muttering and mumbling to himself. When the two Daoist lads unexpectedly came back to the room to fetch some tea for the Tang Monk, they heard 8 Rules complaining about "not enjoying my ginseng fruit," and saying that it would be much better if he could have a taste of another one. Hearing this, Clear Breeze grew suspicious and said, "Bright Moon, listen to that monk with the long horn; he said he wanted to eat another ginseng fruit. Before our master's departure, he told us to be wary of their mischief. Could it be that they have stolen our treasures?" Turning around, Bright Moon said, "Elder Brother, it looks bad, very bad! Why has the golden mallet fallen to the ground? Let's go into the garden to take a look." They ran hastily to the back and found the door to the flower garden open. "I closed this door myself," said Clear Breeze. "Why is it open?" They ran past the flower garden and saw that the door to the vegetable garden was also open. They dashed into the ginseng garden; running up to the tree, they started to count, staring upward. Back and forth they counted but they could find only twenty-two of the fruits. "You know how to do accounting?" asked Bright Moon. "I do," said Clear Breeze, "give me the figures!"

"There were originally thirty fruits," said Bright Moon. "When Master opened the garden to the public, he divided two of them for all of us, so that twenty-eight fruits were left. Just now we knocked down two more for the Tang Monk, leaving twenty-six behind. Now we've only twenty-two left. Doesn't that mean that four are missing? No need for further explanation; they must have been stolen by that bunch of rogues. Let's go and chide the Tang Monk."

The two of them went out of the garden gate and came directly back to the main hall. Pointing their fingers at the Tang Monk, they berated him with all kinds of foul and abusive language, accusing him of being a larcenous baldhead and a thievish rat. They went on like this for a long time, until finally the Tang Monk could not endure it any longer. "Divine lads," he said, "why're you making all this fuss? Be quiet a moment. If you've something to say, say it slowly but don't use such nonsensical language."

"Are you deaf?" asked Clear Breeze. "Am I speaking in a barbarian tongue that you can't understand? You stole and ate our ginseng fruits. Do you now forbid me to say so?"

"What is a ginseng fruit like?" asked the Tang Monk.

"Like an infant," said Bright Moon, "as you said when we brought two of them for you to eat just now."

"Infinite Light God!" exclaimed the Tang Monk. "I only had to take one look at that thing and I trembled all over! You think I'd dare steal one and eat it? Even if I'd a case of bulimia, I'd not dare indulge in such thievery. Don't blame the wrong person."

"You might not have eaten them," said Clear Breeze, "but your followers wanted to steal them and eat them."

"Perhaps you're right," said Tripitaka, "but there's no need for you to shout. Let me ask them. If they have stolen them, I'll ask them to repay you."

"Repay!" said Bright Moon. "You'd not buy these fruits even if you had the money!"

"If they can't buy them with money," said Tripitaka, "they can at least offer you an apology, for as the proverb says, 'Righteousness is worth a thousand pieces of gold.' That should be sufficient. Moreover, we're still not sure whether it is my disciples who took your fruits."

"What do you mean, not sure?" said Bright Moon. "They were arguing among themselves, saying something about the portions not being equally divided."

"Disciples," cried Tripitaka, "come, all of you." When Sand-monk heard this, he said, "It's terrible! We've been discovered! Old master is calling us, and the Daoist lads are making all this racket. They must have found out!"

"It is extremely embarrassing!" said Pilgrim. "This is just a matter of food and drink. But if we say so, that means we're stealing for our mouths! Let's not admit it."

"Yes! Yes!" said 8 Rules. "Let's deny it!" The 3 of them had no choice however but to leave the kitchen for the main hall.

025

The Zhenyua mortal gives chase to catch the scripture monk; Pilgrim Sun greatly disturbs Five Villages Abbey

The 3 brothers who went to the main hall and said to their master, "The rice's almost done. Why did you call us?"

"Disciples," said Tripitaka, "I didn't want to ask you about the rice. They have something called the ginseng fruit in this Abbey that looks like a new-born infant. Which one of you stole it and ate it?"

"Honestly," said 8 Rules, "I don't know anything about it, and I've not seen it."

"It's the one who is laughing! It's the one who is laughing!" said Clear Breeze. "I was born with a laughing face!" snapped Pilgrim. "Don't think because you've lost some kind of a fruit that you can keep me from laughing!"

"Disciple, don't get angry," said Tripitaka. "Those of us who have left the family should not lie, nor should we enjoy stolen food. If you've in truth eaten it, you owe them an apology. Why deny it so vehemently?" When Pilgrim perceived how reasonable this advice of his master was, he said truthfully, "Master, it's not my fault. It was 8 Rules who overheard those two Daoist lads eating some sort of ginseng fruit. He wanted to try one to see how it tasted and told me to knock down three of the fruits; each of us brothers had one. It's true that we've eaten them. What's to be done about that?"

"He stole four of the fruits," said Bright Moon, "and still this monk could claim that he's not a thief!"

"Infinite Light God!" said 8 Rules. "If you stole four of them, why did you only bring out three for us to divide among ourselves? Didn't you skim something off the top already?"

So saying, Idiot began to make a fuss again. When the mortal lads found out the truth, they became even more abusive in their language; the Great Sage became so enraged that he ground his steel-like teeth audibly and opened wide his fiery eyes. He gripped his golden-hooped rod repeatedly, struggling to restrain himself and saying to himself, "These malicious youths! They certainly know how to give people a lashing with their tongues! All right, so I've to take such abuse from them. Let me offer them in return 'a plan for eliminating posterity,' and none of them will have any more fruit to eat!" Dear Pilgrim! He pulled off a strand of hair behind his head and blew on it with his magic breath, crying "Change!" It changed at once into a specious Pilgrim, standing by the Tang Monk, Awakened to Purity, and Aware of Ability to receive the scolding from the Daoist lads. His true spirit rose into the clouds, and with one leap he arrived at the ginseng garden. Whipping out his golden-hooped rod, he gave the tree a terrific blow, after which he used that mountain-moving divine strength of his to give it a mighty shove. Alas, *leaves fell, limbs cracked, and roots became exposed; the Daoists lost their grass of reverted cinnabar*. After the Great Sage had pushed down the tree, he tried to look for the fruits on the branches but he could not find even half a fruit. The treasure would fall when it met with gold, and both ends of his rod were wrapped in gold. Moreover, iron is also one of the five metallic elements. The blow of the rod, therefore, shook loose all the fruits from the tree, and when they fell, they became assimilated to the earth once they touched the ground, so that there was not a single fruit left on the tree. "Fine! Fine!" he said. "Now all of us can scam!" He put away his iron rod and went back to the front. With a shake of his body he retrieved his hair but the rest of the people, like those of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, could not perceive what had taken place.

We now tell you about the two mortal lads who ranted at the pilgrims for a long time. Clear Breeze said, "Bright Moon, these monks do take our reproach quite well. We've been upbraiding them as if they were chickens all this time but not once have they even attempted to answer us. Could it be that they really did not steal the fruits? With the tree so tall and the leaves so dense, we'd have made a mistake in our tallying, and we might have chided them unjustly. We'd go and investigate further."

"You're right," said Bright Moon and the 2 of them accordingly went back to the garden. But what they saw was only a tree on the ground with broken boughs and fallen leaves without so much as a single fruit on it. Clear Breeze was so aghast that his legs gave way and he fell to the ground; Bright Moon shook so violently that he could hardly stand up. *Both of them were scared out of their wits!* As testimony, this poem says:

*Tripitaka went westward to the Long Life Mount; Wukong cut down the grass of reverted cinnabar.  
Boughs broken and leaves fallen, the divine root exposed: Clear Breeze and Bright Moon were horrified!*

The two of them lay on the ground, hardly able to speak coherently. They could only blurt out, "What'll we do? What'll we do? The magic root of our Five Villages Abbey's severed! The seed of this divine house of ours is cut off! When our master returns, what'll we tell him?"

Then Bright Moon said, "Elder Brother, stop hollering! Let's pull ourselves together and not alarm those monks. There's no one else here; it has to be that fellow with a hairy face and a thunder-god beak who used magic unseen to ruin our treasure. If we try to talk to him, he will probably deny it, and further argument may well lead to actual combat. In the event of a fight, how do you suppose the two of us could stand up to the four of them? It would be better if we deceived them now by saying that the fruits were not missing, and that since we made a mistake in our counting, we're offering them our own apology. Their rice is almost cooked. When they eat, we'll even present them with a few side dishes. When each of them is holding a bowl, you stand on the left of the door and I'll stand on the right, and we'll slam the door shut together. We'll lock it and all the other doors of this Abbey too, so that they will be unable to escape. We can then wait for Master to return and let him do with them what he wills. Since the Tang Monk is an old acquaintance of Master, he might decide to forgive them, and that would be his act of kindness. Should he decide not to however, we've at least managed to catch the thieves, for which we ourselves might be forgiven."

When he heard these words, Clear Breeze said, "You're right! You're right!"

The 2 of them forced themselves to look cheerful as they walked back to the main hall from the rear garden. Saluting the Tang Monk, they said, "Master, our coarse and vulgar language just now must have offended you. Please pardon us!"

"What're you saying?" asked Tripitaka. "The fruits were not missing," said Clear Breeze, "but we'd not see them clearly because of the dense foliage. We went back again to have a second look and we found the original number."



Hearing this, 8 Rules chimed in at once. “You lads, you’re young and impulsive, quick to condemn before you even know the truth of the matter. You throw out your castigations at random, and you’ve accused us unjustly. It’s blasphemy!” Pilgrim however, understood what was going on; though he did not say anything, he thought to himself, “It’s a lie! It’s a lie! The fruits were done with! Why do they say such things? Could it be that they have the magic of revivification?” Meanwhile, Tripitaka said to his disciples, “In that case, bring us some rice. We’ll eat and leave,”

8 Rules went at once to fetch the rice while Sand-monk set the table and chairs. The two lads brought out seven or eight side dishes, including pickles, pickled eggplants, radishes in juice sauce, string beans in vinegar, salted lotus roots, and blanched mustard plants for master and disciples to eat with their rice. They also brought out a pot of fine tea and two mugs, and stood on either side of the table to wait on them. As soon as the four of them had taken up their bowls however, the lads, one on each side, took hold of the door and slammed it tightly shut. They then bolted it with a double-shackle brass lock. “You lads made a mistake,” said 8 Rules with a laugh, “or else your custom here is rather strange. Why do you shut the door before you eat?”

“Indeed!” said Bright Moon. “For good or ill, we’ll not open the door until after we’ve eaten.” Then Clear Breeze lashed out at them, saying, “You bulimic and gluttonous bald thieves! You stole and ate our divine fruits, and you’re thus already guilty of eating the produce of someone’s garden without permission. Now you’ve even knocked over our divine tree and destroyed this mortal root of our of Five Villages Abbey. And you still dare to speak to us defiantly? If you think you can reach the Western Heaven to behold the face of God, you’ll have to ride the Wheel of Transmigration and do it in the next disciple!” When Tripitaka heard these words, he threw down his rice bowl and sat there weighed down as if by a huge boulder on his heart. The lads then went to lock both the front gate and the second gate before returning to the main hall to revile them once more with the most abusive language. Calling them thieves repeatedly, the two lads assailed them until it was late, when they then left to eat. After the meal, the lads went back to their own room.

The Tang Monk began to complain at Pilgrim, saying, “You mischievous ape! Every time it’s you who cause trouble! If you stole and ate their fruits, you’d have been more forbearing to their reproach. Why did you’ve to knock down even their tree? If you’re brought into court, even if your old man were the judge, you’d be unable to defend yourself when you behave like that!”

“Don’t scold me, Master,” said Pilgrim. “If those lads have gone to sleep, let them sleep. We’ll leave tonight.”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “all the doors have been locked securely. How can we leave?” Pilgrim said with a laugh, “Never mind! Never mind! Old monkey will find a way!”

“You’ve a way, all right!” said 8 Rules. “All you need to do is to change into some sort of an insect, and you can fly out through a hole or a crack in the window. But what about those of us who don’t know how to change into these tiny things? We’ve to stay and take the blame for you.”

“If he does something like that,” said the Tang Monk, “and leaves us behind, I’ll recite that *Old-Time Thread* and see whether he can take it!” When he heard this, 8 Rules did not know whether to laugh or not. “Master,” he said, “what are you saying? I’ve only heard the *Sūrangama Thread*, the *Lotus Thread*, the *Peacock Thread*, the *Guanyin Thread*, and the *Diamond Thread* in Religion but I’ve never heard of anything called the *Old-Time Thread*.”

“You don’t know about this, Brother,” said Pilgrim. “This fillet that I wear on my head was given to Master by the Nun Guanyin. Master deceived me into wearing it, and it took root, as it were, on my head so that it could never be removed. There is, moreover, the Tight-Fillet Spell or the Tight-Fillet *Thread*. The moment he recites that, I’ll have a terrible headache, for it’s the magic trick designed to give me a hard time. Master, don’t recite it. I’ll not betray you. No matter what happens, all of us will leave together.”

As they spoke, it grew dark and the moon rose in the East. Pilgrim said, “When all is quiet and the crystal orb is bright, this is the time for us to steal away.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “stop this hocus-pocus. The doors are all locked. Where are we going to go?”

“Watch my power!” said Pilgrim. He seized his golden-hooped rod and exercised the lock-opening magic; he pointed the rod at the door and all the locks fell down with a loud pop as the several doors immediately sprung open. “What talent!” said 8 Rules, laughing. “Even if a little smith were to use a lock pick, he wouldn’t be able to do this so nimbly.” Pilgrim said, “This door is nothing! Even the South Heaven Gate would immediately fly open if I pointed this at it!” They asked their master to go outside and mount the horse; 8 Rules poled the luggage and Sand-monk led the way toward the West. “Walk slowly, all of you,” said Pilgrim. “Let me go and see to it that the Daoist lads will sleep for a month.”

“Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “don’t harm them, or you’ll be guilty of murder as well as robbery.”

“I’ll not harm them,” said Pilgrim.

Going inside again, he went to the door of the room where the lads were sleeping. He still had around his waist a few sleep-inducing insects that he had won from the Deity-King Virūpākṣa when they had played a game of guess-fingers at the East Heaven Gate. Taking out two of these insects, he filipped them through a hole in the window. They headed straight for the faces of the lads who fell at once into a sleep so deep that it seemed nothing could arouse them. Then Pilgrim turned around and caught up with the Tang Monk, and all of them fled, following the main road to the West.

Throughout that whole night, the horse did not pause to rest, and they journeyed until it was almost dawn. “Monkey,” said the Tang Monk, “you’ve just about killed me! Because of your mouth, I’ve had to spend a sleepless night.”

“Stop this complaining!” said Pilgrim. “It’s dawn now, and you may as well take some rest in the forest here by the road. After you’ve regained a little strength, we’ll move on.” All that elder could do was to dismount and use a pine root as his couch. As soon as he put down the luggage, Sand-monk dozed off while 8 Rules fell asleep with a rock as his pillow. The Great Sage Sun however, had other interests. Just look at him! Climbing the trees and leaping from branch to branch, he had a grand time playing. We’ll leave them resting and make no further mention of them now.

We now tell you about the Great Mortal who left the Tushita Palace with the lesser mortals after the lecture was over. Descending from the Green Jasper Heaven and dropping down from the auspicious clouds, they arrived before the Five Villages Abbey at the Long Life Mountain where they found the gates wide open and the grounds neat and clean. “Well,” said the Great Mortal, “Clear Breeze and Bright Moon are not that useless after all! Ordinarily, they don’t even bestir themselves when the sun is high but today when we’re away, they are willing to rise early to open the gates and sweep the grounds.” All the lesser mortals were delighted but when they reached the main hall, they discovered neither fire and incense nor any trace of a human person. Clear Breeze and Bright Moon were simply nowhere to be seen!

“Because of our absence, the two of them must have stolen away with our things,” said the rest of the mortals. “Nonsense!” said the Great Mortal. “How could those who seek the way of mortality dare to engage in such wickedness? They must have forgotten to close the gates last night and gone to sleep. They are probably not yet awake this morning.” When they all reached the door of the Daoist lads, they found the door tightly shut and heard heavy snoring from within. They pounded on the door and attempted to rouse them but the lads could not be wakened by all that clamour. Finally, the mortals managed to pry open the door and pull the lads off their beds; even then they did not wake up. “Dear mortal lads!” said the Great Mortal, laughing. “Those who have attained mortality should not be so desirous of sleep, for their spirits are full. Why are they so fatigued? Could it be that someone has played a trick on them? Quickly, bring me some water!” One of the lads brought half a cup of water to the Great Mortal who recited a spell before spitting a mouthful of water on the lads’ faces. The Sleep Demon was thus exorcised.

Both lads woke up, and as they opened their eyes and wiped their faces, they suddenly saw all the familiar faces of their teacher, Lord, Equal to Earth, and the other mortals. Clear Breeze and Bright Moon were so startled that they knelt down at once and respected, saying, “Master, your old friends, the monks who came from the East, were a bunch of vicious thieves!”

“Don’t be afraid!” said the Great Mortal, smiling. “Take your time and tell me about them.”

“Master,” said Clear Breeze, “Shortly after you left that day, a Tang Monk from the Land of the East did indeed arrive with three other monks and a horse. In obedience to your command, your disciples, having ascertained their origin, took two of the ginseng fruits and served them. That elder however, had worldly eyes and a foolish mind, for he could not recognise the treasures of our mortal house. He insisted that they were new-born infants not yet three days old and absolutely refused to eat them. For this reason, each of us ate one of the fruits instead. We didn’t expect however, that one of his three disciples, a fellow whose surname was Sun and whose given name was Wukong Pilgrim, would steal and eat four of the fruits. When we discovered theft, we tried to reason with him, speaking rather forthrightly to that monk. But he refused to listen to us and instead used the magic of the spirit leaving the body to – oh, this is painful!” When the two lads reached this point in their discourse, they could not hold back their tears. “Did that monk strike you?” asked the rest of the mortals. “He did not hit us,” said Bright Moon, “but he struck down our ginseng tree.”

When the Great Mortal heard this, he was not angry. Instead, he said, “Don’t cry! Don’t cry! What you don’t know is that the fellow with the name of Sun is also a minor mortal of the Great Monad; he has great magic power and has caused much disturbance in Heaven. If our treasure tree is struck down, all I want to know is whether you’ll be able to recognise these monks if you see them again.”

“Certainly,” said Clear Breeze. “In that case,” said the Great Mortal, “follow me. The rest of you disciples can prepare the instruments of punishment. When I return, they shall be whipped.”

The various mortals took this instruction while the Great Mortal mounted the auspicious luminosity with Clear Breeze and Bright Moon to give chase to Tripitaka. In a moment they had covered a thousand miles but when the Great Mortal looked toward the West at the tip of the cloud, he could not see the Tang Monk anywhere. When he turned around and stared eastward instead, he found that he had overtaken the pilgrims by some nine hundred miles, for that elder, even with his horse galloping nonstop all night, had managed to travel only one hundred and twenty miles. Reversing the direction of his cloud, the Great Mortal made the trip back in an instant. “Master,” said one of the lads, “that’s the Tang Monk sitting beneath a tree by the road.”

“I see him,” said the Great Mortal. “You two go back and prepare the ropes. Let me capture them by myself.” Clear Breeze and Bright Moon went back to the Abbey at once. Dropping down from the clouds, the Great Mortal changed himself into a mendicant Daoist<sup>1</sup> with one shake of his body. He was dressed in a *priestly robe patched 100 times and a sash in the style of Mr. Lü*. <sup>2</sup>*His hands waved a yak’s-tail and lightly tapped a fish-drum. Straw sandals with three loops shod his feet; a sinuous turban wrapped around his head. With wind-filled sleeves all aflutter, he recited of the rising moon.* He came straight to the tree and said in a loud voice to the Tang Monk, “Elder, this poor Daoist raises his hands!”

Hastily returning the salutation, the elder said, “Pardon me for not paying respects to you first.”

“Where did the elder come from,” asked the Great Mortal, “and why is he sitting in meditation here beside the road?” Tripitaka said, “I’m a scripture seeker sent by the Great Tang of the Land of the East to the Western Heaven.” Feigning surprise, the Great Mortal said, “When you came from the East, did you pass through my humble mountain abode?”

“Which precious mountain is the abode of the venerable mortal?” asked the elder.

The Great Mortal said, “The Five Villages Abbey in the Long Life Mountain’s where I reside.”

The moment he heard this, Pilgrim having something very much on his mind, replied, “No! No! We came by another route up there.”

Pointing a finger firmly at him, the Great Mortal said with a laugh, “Brazen ape! Who are you trying to fool? You struck down my ginseng fruit tree in my Abbey, and then you fled here in the night. You dare deny this? Why try to cover up? Don’t run away! Go quickly and bring back another tree for me!”

When Pilgrim heard this, he grew angry and whipped out his iron rod; without waiting for further discussion, he struck at the head of the Great Mortal. Stepping aside to dodge the blow, the Great Mortal trod on the auspicious luminosity and rose into the air, closely followed by Pilgrim who also mounted the clouds. The Great Mortal changed back into his true form in mid-air, and this was how he appeared: *he wore a cap of purple gold and a carefree gown trimmed with crane’s down. He had on his feet a pair of shoes; a silk sash was tied round his waist. His body seemed that of a lad his face, that of a lady fair but with flowing moustaches and beard. Some crow feathers adorned his hair. He faced Pilgrim but without a weapon save a jade-yak’s tail<sup>3</sup> that he twirled in his hand.* Above and below, Pilgrim struck wildly with his rod, only to be parried repeatedly by the Great Mortal wielding his jade yak’s tail. After two or three rounds of fighting, the Great Mortal displayed his magic of the cosmos in the sleeve. Standing on the tip of a cloud and facing the wind, he gently flipped open the wide sleeve of his gown and sent it toward the earth in a sweeping motion. All four of the monks and the horse were at once scooped up into the sleeve. “This is dreadful!” said 8 Rules. “We’ve been placed in a clothes bag!”

“It isn’t a clothes bag, Idiot!” said Pilgrim. “We’ve been scooped up into his sleeve.”

“In that case,” said 8 Rules, “it shouldn’t be too difficult! Let me use my rake and make a hole in his gown. When we make our escape, we can claim that he was careless and didn’t hold us securely, so that we fell out of his sleeve.”

Idiot started to dig into the garment madly with his rake but all to no avail: although the material was soft to the touch, it was harder than steel when it came into contact with the rake. Turning around the direction of his auspicious cloud, the Great Mortal went back to the Five Villages Abbey and sat down, ordering his disciples to fetch some ropes. As the little mortals went about their business, he fished out the pilgrims one by one like puppets from his sleeve: first he brought out the Tang Monk and had him bound to one of the large pillars in the main hall. Then he took out the three disciples and had them tied to three other pillars. Finally he took out the horse and had it tied up in the courtyard; it was given some hay while the luggage was thrown into one of the corridors. “Disciples,” said the Great Mortal, “these monks are persons who have left home, and they should not be harmed by knives or spears, hatchets or battle-axes. Bring out my leather whip instead and give them a beating – as an act of vengeance for my ginseng fruit!” Some of the mortals went quickly to fetch the whip – not the sort made of cow hide, sheep hide, suede, or buffalo hide. It was, rather, a whip of seven thongs made of dragon hide. After soaking it in water for a while, one of the more robust little mortals took it up and asked, “Master that one shall be flogged first?” The Great Mortal replied, “Tripitaka Tang is the unworthy senior member of his party. Beat him first.”

When Pilgrim heard what he said, he thought to himself, “That old monk of mine cannot stand such flogging. If he’s destroyed by the whip, wouldn’t that be my sin?” Unable to remain silent any longer, he said, “Sir, you’re mistaken! It was I who stole the fruits, and it was I who ate the fruits. Moreover, I also pushed down the tree. Why don’t you flog me first? Why do you’ve to whip him?”

“This brazen ape,” said the Great Mortal, laughing, “does know how to speak courageously! All right, let’s flog him first.”

“How many lashes?” asked the little mortal. “As many as the original number of the fruits,” said the Great Mortal. “Thirty lashes.” Lifting high the whip, the little mortal was about to strike. Fearing that this weapon of a mortal’s house might be a formidable one, Pilgrim opened his eyes wide to see where he was going to be struck and found that the little mortal was about to flog his legs. With a twist of his torso, Pilgrim said, “Change!” and his two legs became hard as steel, all ready to be flogged. With measured strokes, the little mortal gave him thirty lashes before putting down the whip.

It was already almost noon when the Great Mortal said again, “We’d now give Tripitaka a flogging, since he did not know how to discipline his mischievous disciples and permitted them to indulge in unruly behaviour.” As the mortal took up the whip again, Pilgrim said, “You’re again mistaken, sir. When the fruits were stolen, my master was conversing in this hall with the two lads; he had no knowledge whatever of what we brothers had perpetrated. Though he might be guilty of not being strict enough in his discipline of us, those of us who are his disciples should receive the punishment for him. Flog me again.”

“This lawless ape!” said the Great Mortal. “Though he is sly and devious, he does possess some filial sentiments! In that case, let’s flog him again.” The little mortal again gave him thirty lashes. When Pilgrim lowered his head to take a look, he saw that his two legs had been beaten until they were shining like mirrors, though he had no sensation whatever, either of pain or of itching. By this time it was getting late, and the Great Mortal said, “Soak the whip in water. Wait until tomorrow, and then we’ll punish them again.”

The little mortals retrieved the whip and placed it in water after which everyone retired to his own chamber. When they had finished their evening meal, all went away to sleep. With tears flowing from his eyes, the elder began to complain bitterly to his three disciples saying, “You all have caused this trouble but I’ve to suffer with you in this place. What are you going to do about it?”

“Stop this complaining,” said Pilgrim. “They flogged me first, and you’ve not even had a taste of it yet. Why do you’ve to grumble like that?”

“Though I’ve not been flogged,” said the Tang Monk, “this rope is causing me to ache all over.”

“Master,” said Sand-monk, “there are others here who are your companions in bondage!”

“Stop this racket, all of you!” said Pilgrim. “In a little while, we’ll all be on our way again.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you’re fibbing again. We’re tightly bound now in hemp ropes sprayed with water. They are not like the locks on those doors that you opened so easily with your magic!”

“This is no exaggeration,” said Pilgrim, “but I’m not afraid of a three-ply hemp rope sprayed with water. Even if it were a coir cord as thick as a small bowl, I’d consider it as insubstantial as the autumn wind!” Hardly had he finished speaking when it became completely quiet everywhere. Dear Pilgrim! He contracted his body and at once freed himself from the ropes, saying, “Let’s go, Master!”

“Elder Brother,” said a startled Sand-monk, “save us, too!”

“Speak softly! Speak softly!” said Pilgrim. He untied Tripitaka, Sand-monk, and 8 Rules; they put on their clothes, saddled the horse, and picked up the luggage from the corridor. As they walked out of the Abbey gate, Pilgrim said to 8 Rules, “Go to the edge of the cliff there and bring back four willow trees.”

“What do you want them for?” asked 8 Rules. “I’ve use for them. Bring them quickly.”

Idiot did possess some sort of brutish strength. He did as he was told, and with one shove of his horn he felled one of the willow trees. Knocking down three more, he gathered them up into a bundle and hauled them back. Pilgrim stripped the branches off the trunks, and the two of them carried the trunks inside where they fastened them to the pillars with the ropes with which they had earlier been tied up themselves. Then the Great Sage recited a spell; biting the tip of his own tongue, he spat some blood on the trees and cried, “Change!” One of them changed into the elder, another changed into a figure like himself, and the two other trees changed into Sand-monk and 8 Rules. They all seemed to look exactly alike; when questioned, they knew how to make replies; when their names were called, they knew how to answer. Only then did the two of them run back out and catch up with their master. As before, the horse did not pause to rest for that whole night as they fled the Five Villages Abbey. When morning arrived however, the elder was nodding on the horse, hardly able to remain in the saddle. When Pilgrim saw him like that, he called out, “Master, you’re terribly soft! How is it that a person who has left home like yourself has so little endurance? If I, old monkey, went without sleep even for a thousand nights, I still would not feel fatigue. Well, you had better get off the horse, so that travellers won’t see your condition and laugh at you. Let’s find a temporary shelter beneath the mountain slope and rest a while before we move on again.”

We’ll not tell you anymore now about master and disciples resting by the way; the Great Mortal rose at the crack of dawn and went out at once to the main hall after taking his morning meal. He said, “Bring out the whip. It’s Tripitaka’s turn today to be flogged.” The little mortal wielded the whip and said to the Tang Monk, “I’m going to beat you.”

“Go ahead,” said the willow tree, and he was given thirty lashes. Changing the direction of his whip, the little mortal said to 8 Rules, “I’m going to flog you.”

“Go ahead,” said the other willow tree, and the one that was changed into the form of Sand-monk gave the same reply when it was his turn. By the time they reached Pilgrim, the real Pilgrim, resting by the wayside, was suddenly sent into a violent shudder. “Something’s wrong!” he exclaimed. “What do you mean?” asked Tripitaka. Pilgrim said, “I transformed four willow trees into the four of us, thinking that since they flogged me twice yesterday, they would not beat me again today. But they are giving my transformed body a beating, and that’s why my true body is shivering. I’d better stop the magic.” Hastily, Pilgrim recited a spell to suspend the magic.

Look at those frightened Daoist lads! The one who was doing the flogging threw away the whip and ran to report, saying, “Master, at first I was beating the Great Tang Monk but now I’m only striking at some willow roots!” When the Great Mortal heard these words, he laughed bitterly, saying, “Pilgrim Sun! Truly a marvellous Monkey King! It was rumoured that when he caused great disturbance in Heaven, even the cosmic nets that the gods set up could not hold him. I suppose there must be some truth to that! So, you escaped! But why did you’ve to tie up these willow trees here to impersonate you and your companions? I’m not going to spare you! I’ll pursue you!” Saying this, the Great Mortal at once rose into the clouds; he peered toward the West and saw the monks fleeing, poling the load of luggage and riding the horse. The Great Mortal dropped down from the clouds, crying, “Pilgrim Sun! Where are you running to? Give me back my ginseng tree!” Hearing this, 8 Rules said, “We’re finished! Our foe is here again!”

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “let’s pack up that little word ‘Kindness’ for the moment. Allow us to indulge in a little violence and finish him off so that we can make our escape.” When the Tang Monk heard these words, he trembled all over, hardly able to reply. Without even waiting for his answer however, Sand-monk lifted his precious staff, 8 Rules brought out his muck-rake, and the Great Sage wielded his iron rod. They all rushed forward to surround the Great Mortal in mid-air and began to strike at him furiously. For this vicious battle, the following poem as testimony says:

*Wukong knew not that Zhen-Yua mortal – Lord Equal to Earth’s – wondrous and strange.*

*Though 3 weapons divine showed forth their might, 1 yak’s-tail flew up with natural ease to parry the thrusts on the left and right to block the blows struck at the front and back.*

*Night passed, day came, still they’d not escape!*

*How long it’d take them to reach the West?*

The three brothers all raised their divine weapons and attacked the mortal together but the Great Mortal had only the fly brush with which to meet his adversaries. The battle however, had not lasted for half an hour when the Great Mortal spread open his sleeve and with one scoop, recaptured the four monks, the horse, and their luggage. Reversing the direction of his cloud, he went back to his Abbey where he was greeted by the other mortals. The Master Mortal took a seat in the main hall and again took out the pilgrims one by one from his sleeve. The Tang Monk was bound to a short locust tree in the courtyard while Sand-monk and 8 Rules were fastened to two other trees, one on each side. Pilgrim however, was tightly bound but left on the ground. “I suppose,” thought Pilgrim to himself, “they are going to interrogate me.” After the mortals had finished tying up the captives, they were told to bring out ten large bales of cloth. “Eight Rules,” said Pilgrim with a laugh, “this gentleman must have the good intention of making us some clothes! He might as well be more economical and just cut us a few monks’ bells!”<sup>4</sup> After the little mortals had brought out the homespun cloth, the Great Mortal said, “Wrap up Tripitaka Tang, Bullseye 8 Rules, and Sand-monk entirely in the cloth.” The little mortals obeyed and wrapped the three of them completely. “Fine! Fine! Fine!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “We’re prepared to be buried alive!” After they were wrapped, the Daoists brought out some lacquer that they had made themselves, and the Great Mortal gave the order that the wrappings of the pilgrims be completely coated with the varnish. Only their faces were left uncovered. “Sir,” said 8 Rules, “I’m all right on top but leave me a hole down below so that I can unburden myself!” The Great Mortal next gave the order that a huge frying pan be brought out. “Eight Rules, we’re lucky!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “If they are hauling out a pan, they must want to cook some rice for us to eat.”

“That’s all right with me,” said 8 Rules. “If they let us eat some rice, we’ll be well-fed ghosts even if we die!” The various mortals duly brought out a huge pan that they set up before the steps of the main hall. After giving the order that a big fire be built with plenty of dry firewood, the Great Mortal said, “Fill the pan with clear oil. When it boils, dump Pilgrim Sun into the pan and fry him! That’ll be his payment for my ginseng tree!”

When Pilgrim heard this, he was secretly pleased, saying to himself, “This is exactly what I want! I’ve not had a bath for some time and my skin is so dry that it’s getting itchy. For good or ill, I’ll enjoy a little scorching and be most grateful for it.” In a moment, the oil was about to boil. The Great Sage however, was quite cautious; fearing that this might be some form of formidable divine magic that would be difficult for him to handle once he was in the pan, he looked around quickly. In the east he saw a little terrace with a sundial on top but to the west he discovered a stone lion. With a bound, Pilgrim rolled himself toward the west; biting the tip of his tongue, he spat a mouthful of blood on the stone lion, crying, “Change!” It changed into a figure just like himself, all tied up in a bundle. His true spirit rose into the clouds, from where he lowered his head to stare at the Daoists.

Just then, one of the little mortals gave this report, “Master, the oil is sizzling in the pan.”

“Pick up Pilgrim Sun and throw him in!” said the Great Mortal. Four of the divine lads went to carry him but they could not lift him up; eight more joined them but they had no success either. They added four more, and still they could not even budge him. “This monkey loves the earth so much that he can’t be moved!” said one of the mortals. “Though he may be rather small, he’s quite tough!” Finally, twenty little mortals managed to lift him up and hurl him into the pan; there was a loud splash, big drops of boiling oil flew out in every direction, and the faces of those little Daoists were covered with blisters. Then they heard the lad who was tending the fire crying, “The pan’s leaking! The pan’s leaking!” Hardly had he uttered these words when all the oil was gone. What they saw in the pan with its bottom punctured was a stone lion.

Enraged, the Great Mortal said, “That wretched ape! He’s wicked indeed! And I’ve allowed him to show off right in front of my nose! So, he wanted to escape but why did he have to ruin my pan? I suppose it’s exceedingly difficult to catch the wretched ape, and even if one does catch him, trying to hold him is like trying to grasp sand or handle mercury, to catch a shadow or seize the wind! All right! All right! Let him go. Untie Tripitaka Tang and bring out a new pan. We’ll fry him instead in order to avenge my ginseng tree.” The various little mortals accordingly went to untie the lacquer cloth but Pilgrim who heard this clearly in the air, thought to himself, “Master is utterly helpless! If he arrives in the pan, the first boiling bubble will kill him and the second will burn him up; by the time the oil sizzles three or four times, he’ll be a messy monk! I’d better go and save him!” Dear Great Sage! He lowered the direction of his cloud and went back to the main hall. With his hands at his waist, he said, “Don’t untie the lacquer wrapping to fry my master. Let me go into the pan of boiling oil instead.”

“You wretched ape!” cried a somewhat startled Great Mortal. “How dare you display such tricks to wreck my stove?”<sup>5</sup>

“If you’ve the misfortune of meeting me,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “your stove deserves to be overturned! Why blame me? Just now I was about to receive your kind hospitality in the form of oily soup but I’d suddenly the urge to relieve myself. If I opened up right in the pan, I was afraid that I might spoil your hot oil so that it’d not be used for cooking. Now that I’m completely relieved, I feel quite good about going into the pan. Don’t fry my master; fry me instead.” When the Great Mortal heard these words, he laughed menacingly and ran out of the hall to catch hold of Pilgrim.

## 026

### Amid the Three Islands Sun Wukong seeks a cure; with sweet dew Guanshiyin revives a tree

*Hold fast in life the sword above the heart. <sup>1</sup>Recall the long beside the suffering.*

*The proverb says the sword’s the law of life but think thrice to check both anger and pride.*

*The noblest<sup>2</sup> is peaceful – it’s taught long ago; “The sage loves virtue”<sup>3</sup> – a truth for all times.*

*The strong man will meet someone stronger still: come to naught at last he surely will!*

The Zhenyuan Great Mortal who grabbed Pilgrim and said, “I know your abilities and I’ve heard of your reputation. But you’ve been most deceitful and unscrupulous this time. You may indulge in all sorts of wizardry but you can’t escape from my hands. I’ll argue with you all the way to the Western Heaven to see that Religious Patriarch of yours but you’ll not get away from having to restore to me the Ginseng Fruit Tree. So stop playing with your magic!”

“Dear Sir!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “How petty you’re! If you want the tree revived, there’s no problem. If you had said so in the first place, we’d have been spared this conflict.”

“No conflict!” said the Great Mortal. “You think I’d let you get away with what you’ve done?”

“Untie my master,” said Pilgrim, “and I’ll give you back a living tree. How’s that?”

“If you really possess the power,” said the Great Mortal, “to make the tree alive again, I’ll go through the proper ceremony of *Eight Salutes* with you and become your bond-brother.”

“Relax!” said Pilgrim. “Let them go and you can be certain that old monkey will give you back a living tree.”

The Great Mortal reckoned that they could not escape; he therefore gave the order to free Tripitaka, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk. “Master,” said Sand-monk, “I wonder what sort of tricks Elder Brother is up to this time.”

“What sort of tricks?” asked 8 Rules. “This is called the trick of ‘Pulling Wool Right over Your Eyes.’ The tree is dead! You think it could be cured and revived? He’s just putting out some empty formula for show. On the pretext of going to find medicine to cure the tree, he will flee and take to the road all by himself. You think he has any care for us?”

“He’ll not dare leave us behind,” said Tripitaka. “Let’s ask him where he is going to find the cure.”

He then called out, “Wukong, how did you manage to deceive the Mortal Master and have us freed?”

"Old monkey is speaking the truth, only the truth," said Pilgrim. "What do you mean by deceiving him?" Tripitaka asked. "Where will you go to find the cure?" Pilgrim replied. "According to an old proverb, 'The cure comes from the seas.' I want to go now to the Great Eastern Ocean and make a complete tour of the Three Islands and the Ten Islets. I want to visit all the Mortals and Aged Sages to ask for a method of revivification that will revive the tree for him."

"How long do you need to be away before returning?" said Tripitaka. "Only three days."

"All right," said Tripitaka. "As you said, I'll give you three days. If you return by that time, everything will be fine. If you don't come back after three days, I'll begin reciting that *Old-Time Thread!*"

"I hear you! I hear you!" said Pilgrim.

Look how he quickly straightened his tiger-skin kilt. As he walked out the door, he said to the Great Mortal, "You need not worry, sir. I leave now but I'll be back very soon. But you must take good care of my master; see that he lacks none of the three meals and the six teas of the day. If my master's clothes become soiled or wrinkled, wash and starch them. Should he want anything, old monkey will settle the account with you when he returns. I'll finish puncturing all the pans for you! If my master's face pales even a little, I'll not take him back; and if he becomes a trifle thin, I'll not leave this place."

"Go, go," said the Great Mortal. "I'll see to it that he doesn't starve!"

Dear Monkey King! He mounted his cloud somersault quickly and left the Abbey of 5 Villages, heading straight for the Great Eastern Ocean. Moving through the air like lightning and meteor, he soon arrived at the mortal region of Penglai.<sup>4</sup> He lowered his cloud and took a careful look below: it was a lovely place indeed for which a testimonial poem says:

*A great land divine, the sages' domain, these Penglai islands calm the winds and waves.  
Jasper towers' cool the heavens with their shades; tall arches' bright reflections float on the sea.  
Mists of five colours veil the jade-green sky; high on the gold turtle stars and moon shine.  
The Queen of the West would this place frequent for 3 Mortals with peaches as present.*

Before he had finished looking at this divine scenery, Pilgrim was already entering Penglai. As he walked, he saw three old men playing encirclement chess in the shade of some pine trees outside the White-Cloud Cave. The one watching the game was the Star of Longevity while the two playing were the Star of Blessing and the Star of Wealth. Pilgrim approached them, crying, "Old brothers, receive my salute!" When the Three Stars saw him, they pushed away the chessboard and returned his salutation. "Great Sage, why did you come here?" they asked. "I came especially to have some fun with all of you," said Pilgrim. "I heard that the Great Sage who forsook Daoism to follow Religion," said the Star of Longevity, "had won back his freedom to protect the Tang Monk on his journey to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. He must be travelling over rugged roads every day. Where would he find time to have fun with us?" Pilgrim said, "To tell all of you the truth, old monkey has run into a little obstacle halfway on the journey to the West. That's why I came to request some assistance but I don't know whether you're willing to help me or not."

"At what place?" asked the Star of Blessing. "What sort of obstacle? Tell us plainly so that we may decide."

"We're stopped while passing the Abbey of Five Villages at the Long Life Mountain."

"The Abbey of Five Villages is the divine residence of the Zhenyuan Great Mortal," said one of the 3 old men who were astonished. "Could it be that you stole and ate his ginseng fruits?"

"So I stole and ate them," said Pilgrim with a laugh. "How much could they be worth?"

"You ape!" said one of the three old men. "You're dumb! A man who takes one whiff of that fruit will live to be three hundred and sixty years old; he eats one and he'll last forty-seven millennia. That's why it bears the name of 'The Long-Life Grass of Reverted Cinnabar.' The level of cultivation in Dao of that Great Mortal far surpasses ours! With such a thing in his possession, he can easily have the same age as Heaven whereas we still have to nourish our sperm-essence, cultivate our breaths, fortify our spirits, harmonize the tiger and the dragon, catch the *kan* to fill up the *li* – in short, we've to spend a lot of time and effort just to attain mortality. How could you say, 'How much could they be worth?' Throughout the whole world, that's the only kind of spiritual root there is."

"Spiritual root! Spiritual root!" said Pilgrim. "I've already uprooted it!"

"What do you mean by 'uprooted it'?" asked the three old men, greatly alarmed. Pilgrim said, "When we went to the Abbey the other day, the Great Mortal was not home, and only two lads received my master. They served him two ginseng fruits but my master did not realise that they were fruits. Thinking that they were infants not yet three days old, he absolutely refused to eat them. The lads took them away and ate them without bothering even to share them with us. So, old monkey went and stole three of the fruits for us three brothers to eat but those two lads without any sense of propriety, kept on calling us thieves. Old monkey got mad and gave the tree a blow with his rod. When it fell to the ground, the fruits on it disappeared, the branches snapped, the leaves dropped, and it died with all its roots exposed. The lads tried to imprison us but old monkey broke their lock and left. Early next morning, their master came back and gave chase; we'd a few rough exchanges with him which led eventually to a fight. In a flash, he flipped open that sleeve of his and bagged all of us. We're bound and shackled, interrogated and whipped for a whole day but we managed to escape again that night. He caught up with us once more and took us captive. Mind you, there was not an inch of steel on him! He had only that yak's tail to parry our blows but none of the three weapons of us brothers could even touch him. And so he gave us more of the same treatment, wrapping my master and my two younger brothers in cloth coated with varnish but putting me in a pan of boiling oil. I then showed him my special talent for escape but not before I'd punctured his pan. When he saw that he could not hold me captive, he became somewhat intimidated, and that was when I sweet-talked him into freeing my master and my brothers with the promise that I'd revive his tree for him. That's how we came to a temporary truce. When I remembered the saying, 'The cure comes from the seas,' I decided to pay you three old Brothers a visit in this lovely place. If you've any formula to cure the tree, please pass it on to me at once so that I can rescue the Tang Monk from his ordeal."

When the Three Stars heard these words, they became distressed also. One of them said, "Monkey, you're completely ignorant of people! That Master Zhenyuan is the patriarch of earthbound mortals while we belong to the lineage of divine mortals. You may have some sort of position in Heaven but you're only an irregular number in the Great Monad clan, and you've yet to attain an authentic rank. How could you possibly expect to escape from him? If you had killed some beast or bird, some insect or scaly creature, all you'd need is one grain of my millet-elixir and it would be revived. The ginseng fruit however, is the very root of all divine trees. How could it be healed? There's no cure for it!" When Pilgrim heard that there was no cure available, his brow became completely furrowed.

"Great Sage," said the Star of Blessing, "though there is no cure here, there may be one in another place. Why are you so dejected?" Pilgrim said, "Of course, I don't mind going to another place to seek a cure. It would have been a small matter indeed, even if I'd to journey to the edge of the seas or make a complete tour of the thirty-six Heavens. But that Elder Tang of mine who is neither tolerant nor magnanimous, has given me a limit of three days. If I don't return with something after three days, he'll start re citing the Tight-Fillet Spell."

"Good! Good! Good!" said the Three Stars, laughing. "Had it not been for this little means of control, you'd be crawling all over Heaven again!" Then the Star of Longevity said, "Relax, Great Sage. Don't worry. Though that Great Mortal is our senior, he does know us. As we've not visited him for a long time, and as it is for the sake of the Great Sage, we three shall go and call on him right now. We'll express your concern to the Tang Monk and tell him not to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell. Three days, four days – what's the difference? We'll not leave them until you come back with the cure."

"Thank you! Thank you!" said Pilgrim. "Please get on with your journey, old Brothers. I'm off."

So the Great Sage took leave of them. The Stars mounted the auspicious luminosity and went straight to the Abbey of 5 Villages. The crowd at the Abbey was milling about when suddenly the cries of cranes could be heard in the sky to announce the arrival of the 3 elders. See a *sky lit up by sheens of auspicious light as sweet, unending fragrance filled the air. Coloured mist – 1000 strands – veiled the feathered gowns; fleecy clouds in petals held up the Mortals' feet (as green phoenixes flew and red phoenixes soared). Their sleeves sent a scented breeze to sweep the earth; their staffs like hanging dragons, brought laughter happy; beards swayed before them like medals of jade. Their blithe, youthful features showed no grief or care; strong, healthy frames were those of the blessed. They held tallies of stars to fill up the sea-mansions; from their waists hung the gourds and precious scrolls. 100 millennia – so grand was their age. On the 3 Islands and 10 Islets they freely lived. They came to this world often to grant their boons and increase man's blessings 100-fold. The whole wide world bright with glory and wealth! To have now endless blessing and endless life! Three elders riding on halos saw the Mortal Great: what boundless peace and blessing filled the hall!* When a mortal lad saw this, he ran to make the report, "Master, the Three Stars from the sea have arrived."

Master Zhenyuan was just chatting with the Tang Monk and his disciples. Hearing the announcement, he went down the steps into the courtyard to receive the visitors. When 8 Rules saw the Star of Longevity he grabbed him and said with a laugh, "You blubbery old codger! I've not seen you for a long time and you still look so dashing! Why, you didn't even bring along a hat!"

Taking off his own monk's cap, he plopped it on the head of the Star, clapped his hands, and roared with laughter. "Fine! Fine! Fine!" he cried. "As the saying goes, 'Put on the cap to increase riches!'"

Throwing away the cap, the Star of Longevity snapped back, "You stupid coolie! You've absolutely no manners!"

"I'm no coolie," said 8 Rules, "but you're all knaves."

"You're indeed a stupid coolie," said the Star of Blessing, "and you even dare to call people knaves?"

"If you're not the knaves of some household," said 8 Rules again, laughing, "how is it that you come bearing the names 'Increase Age,' 'Increase Blessing,' and 'Increase Wealth'?"

At that moment, Tripitaka ordered 8 Rules to step back while he straightened his clothes quickly to greet the Three Stars who in turn saluted the Great Mortal as a senior colleague before they dared take a seat. After they were seated, the Star of Wealth said, "We apologise for not coming to pay our respects for such a long time. We came now especially to see you since we learned that the Great Sage Sun had caused some disturbance here."

"Has Pilgrim Sun been to Penglai already?" asked the Great Mortal. "Yes," said the Star of Longevity. "As he had damaged the cinnabar tree of the Great Mortal, he came to our place to seek a cure. When he found out that we didn't have any, he went elsewhere in search of it. He was afraid however, that he would exceed the time limit of three days set by the holy monk and provoke him to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell. That is the reason why we came to see you and to ask you for an extension of the limit." When Tripitaka heard this, he said repeatedly, "I'll not recite it! I'll not recite it!"

As they talked, 8 Rules came running in again to tug at the Star of Blessing. Demanding that he be given some fruits to eat, he began to give the Star a complete search, poking into his sleeves, frisking his waist, and even lifting up the hem of his robe. "What sort of bad manners is that, 8 Rules?" asked Tripitaka with a laugh. "I'm not ill-mannered," said 8 Rules. "This is called 'Every Turn's a Blessing.'" Tripitaka again ordered him to leave. As he slogged toward the door, Idiot turned and stared fiercely at the Star of Blessing. "Stupid coolie!" said the Star. "How have I offended you that you'd be so mad at me?"

"I'm not mad at you," said 8 Rules. "I'm just doing what they call 'Turning Your Head to Look for Blessing!'" When Idiot went out of the door, he ran into a little lad holding four teaspoons while searching in the hall for the cups with which he could present tea. 8 Rules grabbed the spoons and ran into the main hall; picking up a sonorous stone, he began to strike it wildly with the spoons as he pranced about. "This monk," said the Great Mortal, "is becoming more and more undignified!"

"I'm dignified," said 8 Rules, laughing. "This is called the *Joyful Festivities of Four Seasons*." "Pilgrim mounted the auspicious clouds to leave Penglai and soon arrived at the Fangzhang Mountain. It was a lovely mountain indeed for which the following testimonial poem says:

*The soaring Fangzhang, a Heaven itself, the primal palace where mortals meet: purple towers light up the 3 pure paths; floral scent floats up with f5-coloured mists.*

*Gold phoenixes oft pause on the pearly arch. Who floods with jade cream<sup>6</sup> the agaric fields?*

*Pink peaches and purple plums newly ripened announce an aeon's change among the gods.*

Pilgrim lowered his cloud but he was in no mood to enjoy the scenery. As he proceeded, he was met by a gentle scented breeze and by the sounds of black cranes. Then he saw in the distance a mortal, from whom *10000 motley beams lit up the sky; coloured mists soared in endless shafts of light. His red phoenix's mouth held flowers fresh; green phoenix flew with canorous cries. With luck like the sea and age like a mount, he looked like a boy of sound, healthy frame. His vase kept the cave-heaven's ageless drug; a seal old as the sun hung from his waist. He brought blessings to mankind severally and saved the world a few times from distress. King Wu summoned him to add to his age. He always attended the Festival of Peach. He taught the monks to break their worldly ties, revealing like lightning a great way to them. He crossed the seas to wish a man long life and saw God often at Spirit Mount. His holy title: Grand Thearch of the East, first of the mortals midst smoke and mist.* Somewhat shamefacedly, Pilgrim Sun met him and said, "Grand Thearch, I'm raising my hands!"

The Grand Thearch hastened to return the salutation, saying, "Great Sage, forgive me for not going to meet you. Please come to my place and let me serve you tea."

He then took the hands of Pilgrim and led him inside. It was truly a divine palace where there were countless arches studded with pearl-oyster shells, jasper pools, and jade terraces. As they sat down to wait for their tea, a little lad stepped out from behind the jade screen. He was dressed like this: *his body wore a Daoist robe of lustrous hues; a bright silk sash was tied around his waist; he trod the Dipper wearing a silk head wrap; 'his feet shod straw sandals to tour fairy haunts. Refining the pristinely real he shed his original shell. Merit achieved, he could do as he pleased. He learned the source of spirit, sperm, and breath as a master would know without mistake. He fled from fame, now owning ageless life – the months, the seasons had no hold on him. Passing winding corridors to ascend royal towers, he palmed from Heaven gods' peaches 3 times. In coloured mist he left the kingfisher screens, this lowly mortal named Dongfang Shuo.* <sup>8</sup>When Pilgrim saw him, he laughed and said, "So this little crook's here! But there's no peach at the Grand Thearch's place for you to steal and eat."

Dongfang Shuo saluted to him and replied, "Old burglar! Why did you come? There's no divine elixir at my master's place for you to steal and eat."

"Stop blabbering, Manqian," cried the Grand Thearch. "Bring us some tea."

Manqian was the religious name of Dongfang Shuo. He hurried inside to fetch two cups of tea. After they had finished drinking, Pilgrim said, "Old monkey came here to ask of you a favour. Will you grant me that?"

"What favour?" said the Grand Thearch. "Please tell me."

"I recently became guardian of the Tang Monk on his westward journey," said Pilgrim. "We're passing by the Abbey of Five Villages at the Long Life Mountain where we're insulted by two young lads. My anger of the moment made me topple their Ginseng Fruit Tree that led to the Tang Monk being detained for the time being. That's why I came to ask you for a cure. I hope you'll be generous about the matter."

"You ape," said the Grand Thearch. "You've no care for anything except to cause trouble everywhere. Master Zhenyuan of the Abbey of Five Villages with the holy title of 'Lord, Equal to Earth,' happens to be the patriarch of earthbound mortals. How did you manage to offend someone like him? That Ginseng Fruit Tree of his, you know, is the grass of the reverted cinnabar. If you had stolen it and eaten it, you'd be guilty already. Now you've gone so far as to knock the tree down. You think he'll let you get away with that?"

"Exactly," said Pilgrim. "We did escape but he caught up with us and scooped us up in his sleeve as if we're handkerchiefs. It's a troublesome affair: since I'd not prevail, I'd to promise him that the tree would be cured. That's why I came to beg you."

The Grand Thearch said, "I've one grain of the Great Monad Elixir of Nine Reversions. It can cure all the sentient creatures in the world but it cannot cure trees. For trees are the spirits of earth and wood, nourished by Heaven and Earth. Moreover, the Ginseng Fruit Tree is no tree of the mortal world; if it were, you might find a cure for it. But the Long Life Mountain happens to be a Heavenly region, and the Abbey of Five Villages is a cave-heaven of the West Aparagodāṇiya Continent. And the Ginseng Fruit Tree produced there is a spiritual root that came into existence at the time of creation. How could it be healed? I've no cure, none whatever!"

"If you've no cure, old monkey will take his leave," said Pilgrim. The Grand Thearch would have liked to offer him a cup of jade nectar but Pilgrim said, "This is emergency business; I daren't linger." He then mounted the clouds to proceed to the island of Yingzhou. This, too, was a lovely place for which a testimonial poem says:

*The elegant pearl tree<sup>9</sup> aglow in purple mists; Yingzhou's arches and towers touching the sky; green hills, blue waters, and fair coralline blooms; jade nectar, red steel,<sup>10</sup> and the hard iron stone.*

*The 5-coloured cock crows at the sea's sunrise; the red phoenix, ageless, breathes in scarlet mists.*

*In vain mortals would seek this gourd-held scene, <sup>11</sup>an endless spring beyond the world of forms.*

Great Sage arrived at Yingzhou where before the red cliffs and beneath the pearl trees sat several figures with luminous white hair and beards, mortals of youthful complexion. They were playing chess and drinking juice, telling jokes and reciting poems. Truly there were *hallowed clouds all filled with light; auspicious mists with fragrance afloat; colourful phoenixes calling at the cave's entrance; dark cranes dancing on top of the mountain. Jade-like lotus roots and peaches went well with juice; magic pears and fire dates prolonged the years. None of them had need to heed a royal summons though the divine record had each of their names. Wholly at ease, they could wander and play; with no work or care, they could do as they please. The months, the years had no hold on their lives; throughout the great world they were completely free. How lovely were the black apes who came in pairs, saluting, to present the fruits! How friendly are the white deer who lay down two by two with flowers in their mouths!* Those old men were enjoying themselves when our Pilgrim walked up to them and cried, "How about letting me have some fun too?" When the mortals saw him, they quickly rose to greet him. A poem as a testimony and the poem says:

*The spirit roots of the Ginseng Fruit Tree snapped; the Great Sage called on the gods for a wondrous cure.*

*As scarlet light poured from the divine grove, he's met by the 9 Elders of Yingzhou.*

Recognising the 9 Elders, Pilgrim said, laughing, "Old Brothers, how content you're!"

"If the Great Sage in years past had persevered in the truth," said the 9 Elders, "and han't disrupted Heaven, he'd be even more content than we're. But you're all right now. We heard that you'd returned to the truth to seek God in the West. Where do you find such leisure to come here?" Pilgrim then gave a thorough account of his efforts to find a cure for the tree. Astounded, the 9 Elders said, "You cause too much trouble! Just too much trouble. Honestly, we've no cure."

"If you don't," said Pilgrim, "I'll take leave of you."

The 9 Elders asked him to stay and drink some jade nectar and eat some lotus root. Pilgrim would not sit down but, standing, drank a glass of nectar and ate a piece of lotus. He then left Yingzhou swiftly and headed straight for the Great Eastern Ocean. Soon the Potalaka Mountain came in sight. Dropping down from the clouds, he went straight to the top of the mountain where he saw the Nun Guanyin giving a lecture to the various celestial guardians, dragon-ladies, and Liberation in the purple bamboo grove. As a testimony, a poem says:

*The sea-mistress city's tall with thick hallowed air. Here you see countless marvellous things.*

*Know that the 1000 vague and varied forms are all found in a book's one soundless leaf.<sup>12</sup>*

*4 Noble Truths<sup>13</sup> conferred will bear right fruit: 6 Stages<sup>14</sup> will set you free when listened to.*

*This young grove's<sup>15</sup> pleasures special and true: trees full of reddened fruits and fragrant flowers.*

The Nun was the first to notice Pilgrim's arrival, and she asked the Great Mountain Guardian to go meet him. As he came out of the grove, the guardian shouted, "Sun Wukong where are you going?" Raising his head, Pilgrim cried, "Bear rascal! Is Wukong the name for you to take in vain? If old monkey hadn't spared you back then, you'd have been a corpse on the Black Wind Mountain. Today you're a follower of the Nun, for you've received the virtuous fruit and you've been made a resident of this mortal mountain so that you can listen frequently to the religion teachings. Now with all these benefits, can't you address me as 'Venerable Dad'?" That Black Bear had indeed attained the right fruit but the fact that he was made a guardian of the Potalaka and given the title "Great Guardian" was something that he owed to Pilgrim. So he really could not do anything but smile and say, "Great Abbey, the ancients said, 'The princely man does not dwell on old faults.' Why mention my past? The Nun asked me to come meet you." Our Pilgrim at once became solemn and earnest as he followed the Great Guardian to salute the Nun in the purple bamboo grove.

"Wukong," said the Nun, "where has the Tang Monk reached in his journey?"

"The Long Life Mountain, in the West Aparagodāṇiya Continent," said Pilgrim. "In that Long Life Mountain," said the Nun, "there is an Abbey of Five Villages that is the home of the Zhenyuan Great Mortal. Did you come across him?" Banging his head on the ground, Pilgrim said, "It was all because of your disciple who did not know the Zhenyuan Great Mortal at that Abbey of Five Villages. I offended him by damaging his tree, and he in turn held up my master, preventing him from making any progress in his journey."

"You mischievous monkey!" scolded the Nun who already had knowledge of the whole affair. "You don't know any better! That Ginseng Fruit Tree of his is the spiritual root planted by Heaven and nourished by Earth. Master Zhenyuan himself is also the patriarch of earthbound mortals, and even I must be somewhat deferential to him. Why did you damage his tree?"

Saluting low again, Pilgrim said, "Your disciple was truly ignorant. The day when we arrived at the Abbey, Master Zhenyuan was not home, and only two mortal lads were there to receive us. It was Bullseye Aware of Ability who discovered that they had these fruits, and he wanted to try one. Your disciple stole three such fruits that we three brothers divided up among ourselves. When the lads found out, they kept on chiding us until I became so angry that I pushed down the tree. Their master returned the following day and caught up with us; after he had scooped us up with his sleeve, he had us bound and whipped, interrogating and torturing us for a whole day. We escaped that night but he caught up with us again and took us captive as before. Two or three times it went on like this, and when I became convinced that it was impossible for us to flee, I promised him that I'd heal the tree. I've just made a complete tour of the Three Islands seeking a cure from the sea but none of the mortals was able to give me one. That's why your disciple's come to salute you in all sincerity. I beg the Nun in her compassion to grant me a cure so that the Tang Monk can soon journey toward the West."

"Why didn't you come see me earlier?" asked the Nun. "Why did you go looking instead on the islands?" When Pilgrim heard these words, he was secretly pleased and said to himself, "What luck! What luck! The Nun must have a cure! He went forward again to beg some more, and the Nun said, "The sweet dew in my immaculate vase can heal divine trees or spirit roots."

"Have you tried this before?" asked Pilgrim. "Indeed," said the Nun. "When?" asked Pilgrim.

The Nun said, "Some years ago Laozi'd a wager with me: he took my willow twig and placed it in his elixir-refining brazier until it was completely dried and charred. Then he gave it back to me, and I stuck it in my vase. After one day and one night, I'd my green twig and leaves again, as lovely as before." Laughing, Pilgrim said, "I'm lucky! Truly lucky! If a scorched willow could be revived, what's so difficult about a tree that has been knocked over?" The Nun then gave this order to the rest of her followers: "Maintain your vigilance in the grove. I'll be back soon." She left, balancing the immaculate vase in her hand; the white parrot flew ahead of her while the Great Sage Sun followed from behind. A testimonial poem says:

*The world can't limn this jade-browed<sup>16</sup> golden form: a god who pities and saves us from woes.*

*As stainless God she met kalpas past. A self which can do she has now attained.<sup>17</sup>*

*She calms passion's billows in many lives; her moral nature's wholly unsoiled.*

*The sweet dew long charged with true wondrous might, will bring the precious tree eternal life.*

The Great Mortal was just having lofty conversations with the 3 Elders when all at once they saw the Great Sage Sun drop down from the clouds and shout, "The Nun's arrived. Come meet her quickly! Come meet her quickly!"

The 3 Stars, Master Zhenyuan, Tripitaka, and his disciples all hurried out of the main hall. Stopping her sacred cloud, the Nun first exchanged greetings with Master Zhenyuan before saluting the 3 Stars. After the ceremony, she took the seat of honour as Pilgrim led the Tang monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk to salute her. After that, the various mortals in the Abbey also came to greet her. "Great Mortal," said Pilgrim, "there's no need for further delay. You may as well prepare the table of incense at once and ask the Nun to heal that fruit tree of yours." Saluting low to thank the Nun, the Great Mortal said, "Why should the trivial affair of this plebeian be such a concern to the Nun that she would take the trouble of coming here?"

"The Tang Monk is my disciple," said the Nun. "If Sun Wukong has wronged you, it's only reasonable that he should make recompense and return your precious tree."

"In that case," said the Three Stars, "there's no further need for polite talk. May we ask the Nun to go to the garden and see what can be done?"

The Great Mortal gave the order to prepare an incense table and to sweep the grounds in the rear garden. The Nun was asked to lead the way, followed by the Three Elders, Tripitaka, his disciples, and the various mortals of the Abbey. When they arrived at the garden, they saw the tree lying on the ground – with the soil around it turned up, its roots exposed, its leaves fallen, and its branches dried up. "Wukong," cried the Nun, "stretch out your hand." Pilgrim stretched out his left hand. Dipping the willow twig into the sweet dew of her vase, the Nun then used it as a brush and drew on the palm of Pilgrim a charm that had revivifying power. She told him to place his hand at the base of the tree and watch for the sign of water spurting out. His hand closed tightly, Pilgrim went to the base of the tree and placed his fist on the roots. In a little while, a clear spring welled up from the ground. The Nun said, "That water cannot be touched by any instrument containing any one of the Five Phases. It must be scooped up by a jade ladle. Push the tree back up into an upright position; pour the water over it from the top down. The bark and the roots will grow back together again; the leaves will come out, the branches will turn green, and the fruits will appear."

"Little Daoists," said Pilgrim, "bring me a jade ladle, quickly."

"Your humble Daoist lives in a rural area," said Master Zhenyuan, "and there is no jade ladle available. We've only jade tea cups and jade juice goblets. Can they be used?"

"As long as they are made of jade," said the Nun, "and capable of bailing water, they will be all right. Bring them here."

The Great Mortal asked the little lads to take out some 30 jade tea cups and some fifty juice goblets with which they scooped up the clear water. Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk raised the tree into an upright position and covered its base with topsoil. They then handed the jade cups one by one to the Nun who sprinkled the sweet liquid onto the tree with her willow branch as she recited a spell. Before long, she stopped sprinkling, and the tree turned green all at once with thick leaves and branches. Twenty-three ginseng fruits could be seen on top. Clear Breeze and Bright Moon, the two lads said, "When we discovered our loss the day before, we came up with only twenty-two fruits even after we'd counted them over and over. Why's there an extra one today after it's been revived?"

""Time will disclose the true intent of man,"" said Pilgrim. "Old monkey took only three the other day; the fourth one dropped to the ground and disappeared, for as the local spirit told me, this treasure would become assimilated once it touched earth. 8 Rules kept hollering about my skimming something off the top, and that was how my act was discovered. Only today is this whole mess cleared up."

The Nun said, "That's why I didn't use any instrument containing the Five Phases just now, for I know that this thing and the Five Phases are mutually resistant." Highly pleased, the Great Mortal asked for the gold mallet at once and had ten of the fruits knocked down. He then invited the Nun and the Three Elders to go back to the main hall where a Festival of Ginseng Fruits would be given in their honour. The little mortals duly set the tables and took out the cinnabar trays while the Nun was asked to take the seat of honour in the centre. The Three Elders were seated at the table to the left, the Tank Monk was placed at the right, and Master Zhenyuan as the host took up the seat down below. A testimonial poem says:

*At Long Life Mountain's cave-heaven of old, ginseng fruits ripen every 9 millennia.*

*The spirit root exposed, hurting twigs and shoots; the sweet dew revives, fruits and leaves made whole.*

*3 Elders gladly meet all these old chums; the 4 monks find by luck friends foreordained.*

*Now they 'e learned to eat the ginseng fruits; they'll all be mortals who never age.*

Presently the Nun and the 3 Elders each ate a fruit. Finally convinced that this was a treasure of the mortals, the Tang Monk also ate 1. Each of the 3 disciples also ate 1 and Master Zhenyuan himself took 1 to keep his guests company. The last 1 of the fruits was divided among the other residents of the Abbey. Pilgrim thanked the Nun and the 3 Stars who went back to the Potalaka Mountain and Penglai Island respectively. Master Zhenyuan also prepared some vegetarian juice for a banquet during which he and Pilgrim became bond-brothers. As the proverb says: *Without fighting they'd*

not know each other; but now the two parties have become one household. Happily master and disciples spent a restful night there. Thus it was with that Elder who was *lucky to have tasted the grass of reverted cinnabar*; his long life would endure the ordeals of ogres.

The cadaver demon three times mocks Tripitaka Tang; the holy monk in spite banishes Handsome Monkey King

Tripitaka and his disciples made preparations to leave the next morning. Master Zhenyuan however, had become such a fast friend of Pilgrim since the 2 were made bond-brothers that he refused to let them leave. He gave orders instead that they should be feted for 5 or 6 days. Ever since he took the grass of the reverted cinnabar, the elder's spirit had been strengthened and his body made healthier, he felt as if his entire physical frame had been renewed. As he was intent on acquiring the scriptures, he refused to stay, and so they departed. After taking their leave, master and disciples took to the road and soon came upon a tall mountain. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, "the mountain ahead appears to be rugged and steep, and I fear that the horse may be unable to proceed so easily. Every one of you'd be careful."

"Have no fear, Master," said Pilgrim. "We know how to take care of everything." *Dear Monkey King!*

He led the way; carrying his rod horizontally across both his shoulders, he opened up a mountain path and led them up to a tall cliff. They saw *peaks and summits in rows; streams and canyons meandering; tigers and wolves running in packs; deer and fallow deer walking in flocks; countless musk and bulls massed together; a mountain swarming with foxes and hares. The huge python of 1000 feet; the long snake of 10000 feet. The huge python blew out awful mists; the long snake belched dreadful air. By the road thorns and thistles sprawled unending; on the peak pines and cedars grew resplendent. Wild hemsps and creepers filled their eyes; fragrant plants reached up to the sky. Light descended from the northern pole; clouds parted at the South Polestar. 10000 fathoms of mountain holding old, primal breath; 1000 peaks stood august in the cold sunlight.* The elder on the horse became fearful but Great Sage Sun was ready to show off his abilities. Wielding the iron rod, he let out such a fearful cry that wolves and serpents retreated, that tigers and leopards took flight. Master and disciples thus journeyed into the mountain. As they reached the summit, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, we've been travelling for almost a day and I'm getting hungry. Go somewhere and beg some vegetarian food for me."

"Master, you're not very smart!" said Pilgrim, attempting to placate him with a smile. "We're in the middle of a mountain with no village in sight ahead of us nor any inn behind us. Even if we'd money, there's no place for us to buy anything. Where do you want me to go to find vegetarian food?" Irritated, Tripitaka began to berate his disciple. "You ape!" he cried. "Don't you remember what sort of condition you're in at the Mountain of Two Frontiers? Pinned down by Siddhartha in that stone box, you'd move your mouth but not your feet and owed it to me for saving your life. Now that you've become my disciple by having your head touched and receiving the commandments, why're you unwilling to exert yourself a bit more? Why're you always so lazy?"

"Your disciple's," said Pilgrim, "been rather diligent. Since when've I been lazy?"

"If you're that diligent," said Tripitaka, "why don't you go and beg me some vegetarian food? How can I journey if I'm hungry? Moreover, this mountain's filled with pestilential vapours and if I become ill, how can I hope to reach Thunderclap?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "please don't get upset. No more words. I know that yours is a proud and haughty nature. A little offence and you'll recite that little something spell! Dismount and rest a while. Let me find out whether there's any family for me to beg some vegetarian food."

With a bound, Pilgrim leaped up to the edge of the clouds. Using his hand to shade his eyes, he peered all around. Alas! The journey to the West was a lonely journey, one with neither villages nor hamlets. There were abundant trees and shrubbery but there was no sign of human habitation. Having looked around for some time, Pilgrim saw toward the south a tall mountain where on the eastern slope there seemed to be some tiny specks of red. Lowering his cloud, Pilgrim said, "Master, there's something to eat."

The elder asked, "What's it?"

Pilgrim said, "There's no household here for me to beg for rice. But there's a stretch of red on a mountain south of here and I suppose that must be ripe mountain peaches. Let me go and pick a few for you to eat."

Delighted, Tripitaka said, "For a person who's left the family to have peaches is already the highest blessing!"

Pilgrim took the alms bowl and mounted the auspicious luminosity. Look at that brilliant somersault with cold vapour trailing! In an instant, he was heading straight for the peaches on the south mountain. The proverb says: *a tall mountain will always have monsters; a rugged peak will always produce fiends.*

In this mountain there was indeed a monster-spirit who was disturbed by the Great Sage Sun's departure. Treading dark wind, she came through the clouds and found the elder sitting on the ground. "What luck! What luck!" she said, unable to contain her delight. "For several years my relatives have been talking about a Tang Monk from the Land of the East going to fetch the Great Vehicle. He's actually the disciple of the Gold Cicada and has the original body that's gone through the process of self-cultivation during ten previous existences. If a man eats a piece of his flesh, his age will be immeasurably lengthened. So, this monk's at last arrived today!" The monster was about to go down to seize Tripitaka when she saw 2 great warriors standing guard on either side of the elder and that stopped her from drawing near. These warriors were of course 8 Rules and Sand-monk. 8 Rules and Sand-monk might not have great abilities but after all, 8 Rules was the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds and Sand-monk was the Great Curtain-Raising Captain. Their authority had not been completely eroded and that was why the monster dared not approach them. Instead the monster said to herself,

"Let me make fun of them a bit and see what happens." *Dear monster!*

She lowered her dark wind into the field of the mountain, and with one shake of her body, she changed into a girl with a face like the moon and features like flowers. One cannot begin to describe the bright eyes and the elegant brows, the white teeth and the red lips. Holding in her left hand a blue sandstone pot and in her right a green porcelain vase, she walked from west to east, heading straight for the Tang Monk. *The sage monk resting his horse on the cliff saw all at once a young girl drawing near: slender hands hugged by gently swaying green sleeves; tiny feet exposed beneath a skirt of Hunan silk. Perspiring her face seemed flower bedewed; dust grazed her moth-brows like willows held by mist. And as he stared intently with his eyes, she seemed to be walking right up to his side.* When Tripitaka saw her, he called out, "Eight Rules, Sand-monk, just now Wukong said that this is an uninhabited region. But isn't that a human being who is walking over there?"

"Master," said 8 Rules, "you sit here with Sand-monk. Let Old bull go take a look." Putting down his muckrake and pulling down his shirt, Idiot tried to affect the airs of a gentleman and went to meet her face to face. Well, it was as the proverb says: *One can't determine the truth from afar. One can see clearly when you go near.* The girl's appearance was something to behold! *Ice-white skin hides jade-like bones; her collar reveals a milk-white bosom. Willow brows gather dark green hues; almond eyes shine like silver stars. Her features like the moon are coy; natural disposition is pure. Her body is like the willow-nested swallow; voice's like the woods' reciting oriole. A half-opened haitong' caressed by the morning sun. A newly bloomed peony displaying her charm.* When Idiot saw how pretty she was, his worldly mind was aroused and he could not refrain from babbling. "Nun!" he cried. "Where're you going? What's that you're holding in your hands?"

This was clearly a fiend but he could not recognise her! The girl immediately answered him saying, "Elder, what I've in the blue pot is fragrant rice made from juice cakes, and there's fried wheat gluten in the green vase. I came here for no other reason than to redeem my vow of feeding monks." When 8 Rules heard these words, he was very pleased. Spinning around, he ran like a bull maddened by plague to report to Tripitaka, crying, "Master! 'The good man will have Heaven's reward!' Because you're hungry, you ask Elder Brother to go beg for some vegetarian food. But we really don't know where that ape has gone to pick his peaches and have his fun! If you eat too many peaches, you're liable to feel a bit stuffed and gaseous anyway! Take a look instead. Isn't that someone coming to feed the monks?"

"Coolie, you're just clowning!" said an unbelieving Tang Monk. "We've been travelling all this time and we've not even run into a healthy person! Where is this person who's coming to feed the monks?"

"Master," said 8 Rules, "isn't this the one?"

When Tripitaka saw the girl, he jumped up and folded his hands. "Nun," he said, "where is your home? What sort of family is yours? What kind of vow have you made that you've to come here to feed the monks?" This was clearly a fiend but our elder could not recognise her either! When that monster heard the Tang Monk asking after her background, she at once resorted to falsehood. With clever, specious words, she tried to deceive her interrogator, saying, "Master, this mountain that turns back serpents and frightens wild beasts, bears the name of White Tiger. My home is located due west of here. My parents, still living, are frequent readers of *Threads* and keen on doing good works. They have fed liberally the monks who come to us from near and far. Because my parents had no son, they prayed to the gods, and I was born. They would have liked to marry me off to a noble family but, wary of helplessness in their old age, they took in a son-in-law instead, so that they would be cared for in life and death." Hearing this, Tripitaka said, "Nun, your speech is rather improper! The sage classic says, 'While parents are alive, one does not travel abroad; or if one does, goes only to a proper destination.' If your parents are still living, and if they have taken in a husband for you, then your man should have been the one sent to redeem your vow. Why do you walk about the mountain all by yourself? You don't even have an attendant to accompany you. That's not very becoming of a woman!"

Smiling broadly, the girl quickly tried to placate him with more clever words. "Master," she said, "my husband is at the northern fold of this mountain, leading a few workers to plough the fields. This happens to be the lunch I prepared for them to eat. Since now is the busy season of farm work, we've no servants; and as my parents are getting old, I've to run the errand myself. Meeting you three distant travellers is quite by accident but when I think of my parents' inclination to do good deeds, I'd like very much to use this rice as food for monks. If you don't regard this as unworthy of you, please accept this modest offering."

"My goodness! My goodness!" said Tripitaka. "I've a disciple who has gone to pick some fruits, and he's due back any moment. I dare not eat. For if I, a monk, were to eat your rice, your husband would scold you when he learns of it. Will it then not be the fault of this poor monk?" When that girl saw the Tang Monk refuse to take the food, she smiled even more seductively and said, "O Master! My parents who love to feed the monks, are not even as zealous as my husband. For his entire life is devoted to the construction of bridges and the repairing of roads, in reverence for the aged and pity for the poor. If he heard that the rice was given to feed Master, his affection for me, his wife, would increase manifold." Tripitaka however, simply refused to eat, and 8 Rules on one side became utterly exasperated. Pouting, Idiot grumbled to himself, "There are countless priests in the world but none is more wishy-washy than this old priest of ours! Here's ready-made rice, and three portions to boot! But he will not eat it. He has to wait for that monkey's return and the rice divided into four portions before he'll eat." Without permitting further discussion, he pushed over the pot with one shove of his horn and was about to begin.

Look at our Pilgrim! Having picked several peaches from the mountain peak in the south, he came hurtling back with a single somersault, holding the alms bowl in his hand. When he opened wide his fiery eyes and diamond pupils to take a look, he recognised that the girl was a monster. He put down the bowl, pulled out his iron rod, and was about to bring it down hard on the monster's head. The elder was so aghast that he pulled his disciple back with his hands. "Wukong," he cried, "whom have you come back to hit?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "don't regard this girl in front of you as a good person. She's a monster, and she has come to deceive you."

"Monkey," said Tripitaka, "you used to possess a measure of true discernment. How is it that you're talking nonsense today? This Nun is so kind that she wants to feed me with her rice. Why do you say that she's a monster?"

"Master," said Pilgrim with a laugh, "how could you know about this? When I was a monster back at the Water-Curtain Cave, I'd act like this if I wanted to eat human flesh. I'd change myself into gold or silver, a lonely building, a harmless drunk, or a beautiful woman. Anyone feeble-minded enough to be attracted by me I'd lure back to the cave. There I'd enjoy him as I pleased, by steaming or boiling. If I'd not finish him off in one meal, I'd dry the leftovers in the sun to keep for rainy days. Master, if I'd returned a little later, you'd have fallen into her trap and been harmed by her." That Tang Monk however, simply refused to believe these words; he kept saying instead that the woman was a good person.

"Master," said Pilgrim, "I think I know what's happening. Your worldly mind must have been aroused by the sight of this woman's beauty. If you do have the desire, why not ask 8 Rules to cut some timber and Sand-monk to find us some grass. I'll be the carpenter and build you a little hut right here where you can consummate the affair with her. We can each go our own way then. Wouldn't that be the thing to do? Why bother to undertake such a long journey to fetch the scriptures?" The elder was a rather tame and gentle person. He was so embarrassed by these few words that his whole bald head turned red from ear to ear.

As Tripitaka was struck dumb by his shame, Pilgrim's temper flared again. Wielding his iron rod, he aimed it at the monster's face and delivered a terrific blow. The fiend however, had a few tricks of her own. She knew the magic of Releasing the Corpse.<sup>3</sup> When she saw Pilgrim's rod coming at her, she roused her spirit and left, leaving behind the corpse of her body struck dead on the ground. Shaking with horror, the elder mumbled, "This ape is so unruly, so obdurate! Despite my repeated pleadings, he still takes human life without cause."

"Don't be offended, Master," said Pilgrim, "just come see for yourself what kind of things are in the pot." Sand-monk led the elder near to take a look. The fragrant rice made from juice cakes was nowhere to be found; there was instead a potful of large maggots with long tails. There was no fried wheat gluten either but a few frogs and ugly toads were hopping all over the place. The elder was about to think that there might be thirty percent truthfulness in Pilgrim's words but 8 Rules would not let his own resentment subside. He began to cast aspersions on his companion, saying, "Master, this woman, come to think of it, happens to be a farm girl of this area. Because she had to take some lunch to the fields, she met us on the way. How could she be deemed a monster? That rod of Elder Brother is quite heavy, you know. He came back and wanted to try his hand on her, not anticipating that one blow would kill her. He's afraid that you might recite that so-called Tight-Fillet Spell, and that's why he's using some sort of magic to hoodwink you. It's he who has caused these things to appear, just to befuddle you so that you'll not recite the spell."

This single speech of 8 Rules, alas, spelled disaster for Tripitaka! Believing the slanderous suasion of Idiot, he made the magic sign with his hand and recited the spell. At once Pilgrim began to scream, "My head! My head! Stop reciting! Stop reciting! If you've got something to say, say it."



"What do I've to say?" asked the Tang Monk. "Those who've left the family must defer to people every time, must cherish kindness in every thought. They must *keep ants out of harm's way when they sweep the floor, and put shades on lamps for the love of moths*. And you, you practice violence with every step! Since you've beaten to death this innocent commoner, what good it'd do even if you're to go acquire the scriptures? You might as well go back."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "where do you want me to go back to?" The Tang Monk said, "I don't want you as my disciple."

"If you don't want me as your disciple," said Pilgrim, "I fear that you may not make it on your way to the Western Heaven."

"My life is in the care of Heaven," said the Tang Monk. "If it's ordained that I'd be food for the monster, even if I were to be steamed or boiled, it's all right with me. Furthermore, do you think really that you've the power to deliver me from the great limit? Go back quickly!"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "it's all right for me to go back but I've not yet repaid your kindness."

"What kindness have I shown you?" asked the Tang Monk. When the Great Sage heard this, he knelt down immediately and respected, saying, "Because old monkey brought great disruption to the Celestial Palace, he incurred for himself the fatal ordeal of being clamped by God beneath the Mountain of Two Frontiers. I was indebted to the Nun Guanyin who gave me the commandments, and to Master who gave me freedom. If I don't go up to the Western Heaven with you, it will mean that I *knowing kindness without repaying am no princely man. Mine will be forever an infamous name.*"

Now the Tang Monk, after all, is a compassionate holy monk. When he saw Pilgrim pleading so piteously with him, he changed his mind and said, "In that case, I'll forgive you this time. Don't you dare be unruly again. If you work violence again as before, I'll recite this spell over and over twenty times."

"You may recite it thirty times," said Pilgrim, "but I'll not hit anyone again." Helping the Tang Monk to mount the horse, he then presented the peaches that he picked. The Tang Monk indeed ate a few of the peaches on the horse to relieve his hunger shortly.

We now tell you about the monster who escaped by rising into the sky. That one blow of Pilgrim's rod did not kill her, for she fled by sending away her spirit. Standing on top of the clouds, she gnashed her teeth at Pilgrim, saying spitefully to herself, "The last few years I've heard nothing but people talking about his abilities but I've discovered today that his is not a false reputation. Already deceived by me, the Tang Monk was about to eat the rice. If he'd just lowered his head and taken one whiff of it, I'd have grabbed him and he'd have been all mine. Little did I anticipate that this other fellow'd return and bust up my business. What's more, I almost received a blow from his rod. If I'd let this monk get away, I'd have laboured in vain. I'm going back down there to make fun of him once more." *Dear monster!* Lowering the direction of her dark cloud, she dropped into the fold of the mountain further ahead and changed with one shake of her body into a woman eighty years old, having in her hands a bamboo cane with a curved handle. She headed toward the pilgrims, weeping each step of the way. When 8 Rules saw her, he was horrified. "Master," he said, "it's terrible! That old Mum approaching us is looking for someone."

"Looking for whom?" asked the Tang Monk.

8 Rules said, "The girl slain by Elder Brother has to be the daughter. This one must be the mum looking for her."

"Stop talking nonsense, bro," said Pilgrim. "That girl's about eighteen but this woman's at least eighty. How'd she still bear children when she's sixty-some years old? She's a fake! Let old monkey go have a look." *Dear Pilgrim!* In big strides he walked forward to look at the monster who *changed falsely into an old dame with temples white as snow. She walked ever so slowly with steps both small and sluggish. Her frail body was most slender; face, a leaf dried and wilted. Her cheek bones jutted upward; lips curled downward and out. Old age is not quite like the time of youth: the whole face is wrinkled like lotus leaves.* Recognising the monster, Pilgrim did not even bother to wait for any discussion; he lifted up the rod and struck at the head at once. When the monster saw the uplifted rod, she again exercised her magic and her spirit rose into the air, leaving behind once more the corpse of her body struck dead beside the road. The sight so frightened the Tang Monk that he fell from his horse. Lying on the road, he did not speak another word except to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell back and forth exactly twenty times. *Alas, poor Pilgrim's head was reduced to an hourglass-shaped gourd!* As the pain was truly unbearable, he had to roll up to the Tang Monk and plead, "Master, please recite no more. Say what you've to say."

"What's there to say?" asked the Tang Monk. "Those who've left the family will listen to the words of virtue to avoid falling into Hell. I've tried my best to enlighten you with admonition. Why do you persist in doing violence? You've beaten to death one commoner after another. How do you explain this?"

"She's a monster," said Pilgrim. The Tang Monk said, "This monkey is babbling nonsense. You tell me that there are that many monsters! You're a person lacking any will to do good, one who is only bent on evil. You'd better go."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "are you sending me away again? All right, I'll go back. But there's something which I find disagreeable."

"What do you find disagreeable?" asked the Tang monk.

"Master," said 8 Rules, "he wants you to divide up the luggage with him! You think he wants to go back empty-handed after following you as a monk all this time? Why don't you see whether you've any old shirt or tattered hat in your wrap there and give him a couple of pieces."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he became so incensed that he jumped up and down, crying, "You loud-mouthed overstuffed coolie! Ever since old monkey embraced the teachings of complete poverty, he has never displayed the least bit of envy or greed. What are you talking about, dividing up the luggage?"

"If you show neither envy nor greed," said the Tang Monk, "why don't you leave?"

"To tell you the truth, Master," said Pilgrim, "when old monkey lived at the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain five centuries ago, he was hero enough to receive the submission of the demons of seventy-two caves and to command forty-seven thousand little fiends. I was quite a man then – wearing on my head a purple gold cap, putting on my body a red and yellow robe, tying around my waist a jade belt, having on my feet a pair of cloud-treading shoes, and holding in my hands the compliant golden-hooped rod. But ever since Extinguishment delivered me from my sins, when with my hair shorn I took the vow of complete poverty and followed you as your disciple, I'd this gold fillet clamped on my head. If I go back like this, I can't face the folks at home. If Master doesn't want me anymore, please recite the Loose-Fillet Spell so that I may get rid of this thing from my head and return it to you. I'll find that most pleasant and agreeable then. After all, I've followed you all this time; surely you'd not deny me this bit of human kindness!"

Greatly startled, the Tang Monk said, "Wukong, I only received the Tight-Fillet Spell in secret from the Nun. There was no Loose-Fillet Spell."

"If there was no Loose-Fillet Spell," said Pilgrim, "then you'd better still take me along." The elder had no alternative but to say, "You'd better get up. I'll forgive you one more time but you must not do violence again."

"I'll not dare do so," said Pilgrim, "I'll not dare do so."

He helped his master to mount up once more and then led the way forward. We now tell you about that monster who had not been killed by Pilgrim's second blow either. In mid-air, the fiend could not refrain from praising her opponent, saying, "Marvellous Monkey King! What perception! He could recognise me even when I'd changed into that form! These monks are moving on rather quickly; another forty miles westward beyond the mountain and they will leave my domain. If some demons or fiends of another region pick them up, people would laugh till their mouths crack up, and I'd eat my heart out! I'll go down and make fun of them one more time." *Dear Monster!* Lowering the dark wind again into the fold of the mountain, she shook her body and changed herself into an old man. Truly he had *flowing white hair like Pengzu's<sup>4</sup> and beard frostier than the Age Star's. A jade stone<sup>5</sup> rang in his ears and gold stars flashed in his eyes. Holding a curved dragon-head cane, he wore a light crane's-down cloak. Grasping in his hands some beads, he recited a Religious Thread.* When the Tang Monk on his horse saw this old man, he was very pleased. "Infinite Light!" he cried. "The west's truly a blessed region! This dear old man can hardly walk but he still wants to recite the *Threads!*"

"Master," said 8 Rules, "stop praising him. He's the root of disaster!"

"What do you mean the root of disaster?" said the Tang Monk. 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother killed his daughter as well as his wife and now you see this old man groping his way here. If we run smack into him, Master, you'll pay with your life since you're guilty of death. Old bull is your follower, so he'll be banished to serve in the army; Sand-monk carries out your orders, so he'll be sentenced to hard labour. But our Elder Brother, of course, will use some kind of escape magic to get away. Now, won't that leave the three of us here to take the blame for him?"

Hearing this, Pilgrim said, "This root of idiocy! Won't this kind of absurdity alarm our master? Let old monkey go and have another look." He put away his rod and went forward to meet the fiend. "Aged Sir," he called, "where are you going? Why are you walking and reciting a *Thread* as well?" Our monster this time somehow misread, as it were, the balance of the steelyard, and she thought that Great Sage Sun was after all an ordinary fellow. Hence she said, "Elder, this old man has lived here for generations. My whole life is devoted to doing good and feeding the monks, to reading scriptures and reciting *Threads*. Fate did not give me a boy, and I'd only a girl, for whom I took in a son-in-law. This morning she went off to take rice down to the fields, and we fear that she might have been made food for the tiger instead. My old wife went searching for her but she, too, did not return. In fact, I've absolutely no idea what has happened to them. That's why this old man came seeking to see if they have been harmed in any way. If so, I've little alternative but to take back their bones and have them buried properly on our ancestral site."

"I'm the ancestor in pulling pranks!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "How dare you sneak up on me and try to deceive me with something up your sleeve? You can't fool me. I can see that you're a monster." The monster was so startled that she could not utter another word. Wielding his rod, Pilgrim was about to strike but he said to himself: "If I don't hit her, she's going to pull some trick again but if I hit her, I fear that Master will recite that spell again." He thought to himself some more: "But if I don't kill her, she can grab Master the moment she has the opportunity, and then I'll have to make all that effort to save him. I'd better strike! One blow will kill her but Master will surely recite that spell. Well, the proverb says: 'Even the vicious tiger will not devour its own.' I'll have to use my eloquence, my dexterous tongue, to convince him, that's all." *Dear Great Sage!* He recited a spell himself and summoned the local spirit and the mountain god, saying to them, "This monster made fun of my master three times. This time I'm going to make sure I'll kill her but you must stand guard in the air. Don't let her get away." When the deities heard this command, neither dared disobey it, and they both stood guard on the edge of the clouds. Great Sage lifted up his rod and struck down the demon whose spiritual light was extinguished only then.

The Tang Monk on the horse was again so horrified by what he saw that he could not even utter a word but 8 Rules on one side snickered and said, "Dear Pilgrim! His delirium is acting up again! He has journeyed for only half a day and he has slaughtered three persons!" The Tang Monk was about to recite the spell when Pilgrim dashed up to the horse, crying, "Master! Don't recite! Don't recite! Just come and take a look at how she looks now." There was in front of them a pile of flour-white skeletal bones. "Wukong," said the Tang Monk, greatly shaken, "this person has just died. How could she change all at once into a skeleton?" Pilgrim said, "She's a demonic and pernicious cadaver, out to seduce and harm people. When she was killed by me, she revealed her true form. You can see for yourself that there's a row of characters on her spine; she's called 'Lady White-Bone.'"

When the Tang Monk heard what he said, he was about to believe him but 8 Rules would not desist from slander. "Master," said he, "his hand's heavy and his rod's vicious. He has beaten someone to death but, fearing your recital, he deliberately changed her into something like this just to befuddle you." Indeed a shilly-shally person, the Tang Monk believed 8 Rules once more and started his recital. Unable to bear the pain, Pilgrim could only kneel beside the road and cry, "Don't recite! Don't recite! If you've something to say, say it quickly."

"Monkey head!" said the Tang Monk. "What's there to say? The virtuous deeds of those having left the family should be like grass in a garden of spring: though their growth is invisible, they multiply daily. But he who practices evil is like a whetstone: though its ruin is invisible, it diminishes daily. You manage to get away even after beating to death altogether three persons only because there's no one here to oppose you, to take you to task in these desolate wilds. But suppose we get to a crowded city and you suddenly start hitting people regardless of good or ill with that mourning staff of yours, how would I be able to go free from that kind of great misfortune caused by you? You'd better go back."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "you've really wronged me. This is undeniably a monstrous spirit, bent on hurting you. I've helped you to ward off danger by killing her but you can't see it. You believe instead those sarcastic and slanderous remarks of Idiot to such an extent that you try to get rid of me several times. The proverb says, 'Nothing can occur three times!' If I don't leave you, I'll be a base and shameless fellow. I'll go! I'll go! It's no big deal in fact for me to leave but then you'll have no man to serve you." Turning angry, the Tang Monk said, "This brazen ape is becoming even more unruly. So you think that you're the only man around here? Aware of Ability and Awakened to Purity, they are not men?"

When the Great Sage heard this statement about the other two disciples, he was so deeply hurt that he could not but say to the Tang Monk, "O misery! Think of the time when Liu Boqin was your companion as you left Chang'an. After you delivered me from the Mountain of Two Frontiers and made me your disciple, I penetrated ancient caves and invaded deep forests to capture demons and defeat monsters. I was the one who, having experienced countless difficulties, subdued 8 Rules and acquired Sand-monk. Today, 'banishing Wisdom just to court Folly,' you want me to go back. That's how it is: *when the birds vanish, the bow's hidden; when the hares perish, the hounds are eaten.* "All right! All right! There's only one thing left for us to settle and that's the Tight-Fillet Spell."

The Tang Monk said, "I'll not recite that again."

"That's hard to say," said Pilgrim. "For when the time comes for you to face those treacherous demons and bitter ordeals, and when you, because 8 Rules and Sand-monk cannot rescue you, think of me and cannot stop yourself from reciting it, I'll have a headache even if I'm one hundred thousand miles away. I'll have to come back to see you, so why don't you let this matter drop now."

When the Tang Monk saw that Pilgrim was so long-winded, he became angrier than ever. Rolling down from his horse, he told Sand-monk to take out paper and brush from one of the wraps. Fetching some water from a brook nearby and rubbing out some ink with an ink-slab on a rock, he wrote at once a letter of banishment. Handing it over to Pilgrim, he said, "Monkey head! Take this as a certificate. I'll never want you as a disciple. If I ever consent to see you again, let me fall into the Avici Hell!" Taking the letter of banishment, Pilgrim said quickly, "Master, no need to swear. Old monkey will leave." He folded up the letter and put it in his sleeve. Attempting once more to placate the Tang Monk, he said, "Master, after all, I've followed you for all this time because of the Nun's instructions. Today I've to quit in mid-journey and am not able to attain the meritorious fruit. Please take a seat and let me salute you, so that I can leave in peace." Tang Monk turned his back and refused to reply,

mumbling only, “I’m a good priest, and I’ll not take the salutation of an evil man like you!” When the Great Sage saw that the Tang Monk refused to answer, he resorted to the magic of the Body beyond the Body. Pulling three pieces of hair from the back of his head, he blew on them a magic breath and cried, “Change!” They changed at once into three Pilgrims who along with himself surrounded the master on all four sides. The master tried to turn left and right but he was unable to dodge anymore and had to receive a salute from one of them. Jumping up, the Great Sage shook his body and retrieved his hair. Then he gave the following instructions to Sand-monk, saying, “Worthy Brother, you’re a good man. Do be careful however, that you don’t listen to the foolish nonsense of 8 Rules. You must also exercise caution on the journey. If there should be a time when a monster catches hold of Master, you just say that old monkey happens to be his senior disciple. When those clumsy fiends of the West get wind of my abilities, they’ll not dare to harm my master.”

“I’m a good priest,” said the Tang Monk, “and I’ll never mention the name of an evil man like you. Go back.” When the Great Sage saw that the elder simply refused to change his mind, he had no alternative but to leave. Look at him: *in tears he respected to part with the priest; in grief he took care to instruct Sand-monk. He used his head to dig up the meadow’s grass and both feet to kick up the ground’s rattan. Like a wheel spinning he entered Heaven and Earth most able to overleap mountains and seas. All at once he completely disappeared; in no time he left on the way he came.* Look at him! He suppressed his outrage and took leave of his master by mounting the cloud-somersault to head straight for the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain. As he was travelling, alone and dejected, he suddenly heard the roar of water. The Great Sage paused in mid-air to look and discovered that it was the high tide of the Great Eastern Ocean. The moment he saw this, he thought of the Tang Monk and could not restrain the tears from rolling down his cheeks. He stopped his cloud and stayed there for a long time before proceeding.

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At Flower-Fruit Mountain a pack of fiends hold assembly; at the Black Pine Forest Tripitaka meets demons

The Great Sage though he was banished by the Tang Monk, was nevertheless filled with regret and nostalgia when he saw the Great Eastern Ocean. He said to himself, “I’ve not come this way for five centuries!” This is what he saw as he looked at the ocean: *vast, misty currents; huge, far-reaching waves – vast, misty currents that join the Milky Way; huge, far-reaching waves that touch the pulse of Earth. The tide rises in salvos; the water engulfs the bays – the tide rises in salvos like the clap of thunder in Triple Spring; the water engulfs the bays as violent gales that blow in late summer. Those old, blessed dragon-drivers<sup>1</sup> would travel no doubt with knitted brows; those young, mortal crane-riders would surely pass by anxious and tense. No village appears near the shore; few fishing boats hug the water. Waves roll like a thousand year’s snow; wind howls as if autumn’s in June. Wild birds can come and go at will; water fowls may stay afloat or dive. There is no fisher before one’s eyes; one’s ears hear only the seagulls. Deep in the sea fishes frolic; across the sky wild geese languish.* With a bound, Pilgrim leaped across the Great Eastern Ocean and soon arrived at the Flower-Fruit Mountain. Lowering the direction of his cloud, he stared all around. Alas that mountain had neither flowers nor plants while the mist and smoke seemed completely extinguished: cliffs and plateaus had collapsed and the trees had dried and withered. It all had become like this when Pilgrim disrupted Heaven and was taken captive to the Region Above, this mountain was burned to total ruin by the Illustrious Sage, Erlang God who was leading the 7 Bond-Brothers of Plum Mountain. Great Sage became more grief stricken than ever and he composed the following long poem in ancient style as a testimony. The poem says:

I view this divine mountain and tears fall; I face it and my sorrows multiply.  
The mountain, I thought then, would not be harmed; today I know this place’s suffered loss.  
Hateful’s that Erlang who vanquished me, that heinous Little Sage who oppressed me.  
In violence he dug up my parental tombs; with no cause he broke up my ancestral graves.  
All Heaven’s mists and fog are now dispersed; the whole land’s wind and clouds both dissipate.  
None can hear a tiger’s roar on eastern peaks; who sees a white ape howling on western slopes?  
The northern gorge has no trace of fox or hare; all deer have vanished from the southern glen.  
Green rocks are burned to form 1000 bricks; the bright sand’s changed to a pile of dirt.  
Tall pines outside the cave have fallen down; green cedars before the cliff are thin and scarce.  
Chun, shan, huai, kui, li, and tan<sup>2</sup> all are scorched; peach, pear, prune, plum, almond, and date are gone.  
How’d silkworms be fed with no mulberry? Midst few bamboos and willows birds can’t live.  
Well-formed rocks on the peak have turned to dust; the brook’s water has dried up – all is grass.  
No orchid grows on parched earth below the cliff; creepers overspread the brown mud by the road.  
To what region have birds of past days flown? To which mountain have the beasts of old retired?  
This gutted spot that snakes and leopards loathe! This blasted place that cranes and serpents shun!  
It must be for evil deeds in former times that I’d this day suffer so much pain.

As the Great Sage was thus expressing his grief, 7 or 8 small monkeys suddenly leaped out with a cry from among the tall grass and bushes on the slope. They rushed forward to surround him and respect, shouting, “Dad Great Sage! You’ve come home today?”

“Why aren’t you all having a little fun?” asked the Handsome Monkey King. “Why is everyone in hiding? I’ve been back for quite a while, and I’ve not seen even the shadow of one of you! Why is that?” When the several monkeys heard these words, every one of them began to weep. “Since the Great Sage was taken captive to the Region Above,” they said, “we’ve been suffering from the hands of hunters, truly an unbearable affliction. How could we withstand those sharp arrows and strong bows, those yellow hawks and wicked hounds, those ensnaring nets and sickle-shaped spears! To preserve our lives, none of us dares come out to play; instead, we conceal ourselves deep in the cave dwelling or take refuge in some distant lairs. Only in hunger do we go steal some grass on the meadow for food, and in thirst we drink the clear liquid from downstream. Just now we heard the voice of our Dad Great Sage, and that was why we came to receive you. We beg you to take care of us.”

When the Great Sage heard these words, he became more distressed. He then asked, “How many of you’re there still in this mountain?”

“Young and old,” said the monkeys, “altogether no more than a thousand.” The Great Sage said, “In former times, I’d forty-seven thousand little monsters here. Where did they go?” The monkeys said, “When Dad left, this mountain was burned by the Nun Erlang, and more than half of them were killed by the fire. Some of us managed to save our lives by squatting in the wells, diving into the brook, or hiding beneath the sheet iron bridge. When the fire was extinguished and the smoke cleared, we came out to find that flowers and fruits were no longer available for food. The difficulty in finding sustenance drove another half of the monkeys away, leaving those of us to suffer here in the mountain. These two years saw our number dwindle even further by more than half when hunters came to abduct us.”

“For what purpose?” Pilgrim asked.

“Talk about those hunters,” said the monkeys, “they’re truly abominable! Those of us who were shot by arrows, pierced by spears, or clubbed to death they took away for food to be served with rice. The dead monkeys would be skinned and boned, cooked with sauce and steamed with vinegar, fried with oil, and sautéed with salt. Those of us who’re caught by the net or the trap would be led away live; they’d be taught to skip ropes, act, somersault, and do cartwheels. They’d have to beat the drum, the gong on the streets, and perform every kind of trick to entertain humans.”

When the Great Sage heard these words, he became terribly angry. “Who’s in charge in the cave now?” he asked. “We’ve still Ma and Liu, the two marshals,” said the little fiends, “Peng and Ba, the two generals: they’re in charge.”

“Report to them at once,” said the Great Sage, “and say that I’ve returned.”

Those little fiends dashed inside the cave and cried, “Dad Great Sage’s come home!”

When Ma, Liu, Peng, and Ba heard the report, they rushed out of the door to respect and to receive him inside the cave. The Great Sage took a seat in the middle as the various fiends all lined up before him to pay homage. “Dad Great Sage,” they said, “we heard recently that you’d regained your life so that you’d protect the Tang Monk on his journey to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. Why aren’t you heading toward the West? Why do you come back to this mountain?”

“Little ones,” said the Great Sage, “you’ve no idea that the Tang Monk is wholly ignorant of who is worthy and who is foolish. For his sake, I caught fiends and overcame demons throughout the journey, using all my abilities. Several times I slew a monster but, accusing me of doing evil and violence, he disowned me as his disciple and banished me back here. He even wrote me a formal letter of banishment as proof that he would never want to use me again.”

Clapping their hands and roaring with laughter, the monkeys said, “Lucky! Lucky! What do you want to be a monk for? Come home and you can lead us to have a few years’ fun. Quick! Let’s bring out the coconut juice for the reception of Dad.”

“Let’s not drink juice just yet,” said the Great Sage. “Let me ask you, how often do those hunters come to our mountain?”

“Great Sage,” said Ma and Liu, “there’s no telling of time. They are here every day to make trouble.”

The Great Sage asked, “Why aren’t they here today?”

Ma and Liu replied, “Just wait and you’ll see them come.”

The Great Sage gave this order: “Little ones, go up to the mountain and bring me the rocks that have been burned to small pieces. Pile them up around here in piles of thirty or sixty pieces. I’ve use for them.” Those little monkeys were like a cloud of bees; they swarmed all over the mountain and brought back the rock pieces and piled them together. When the Great Sage saw that, he said, “Little ones, go hide in the cave. Let old monkey exercise his magic.”

Great Sage went straight up to the peak to look around, and he saw over a thousand men and horses approaching from the southern half of the mountain. Beating drums and striking gongs, they were holding spears and swords, leading hawks and hounds. When the Monkey King stared carefully at them, they appeared to be most ferocious indeed. Dear men! Truly fierce! He saw *fox skins covered their heads and backs; silk brocades wrapped around their torsos; quivers full of wolf-teeth arrows; <sup>3</sup>and carved bows hung on their thighs. The men seemed mountain-prowling tigers; the horses like brook-leaping dragons. The whole group of men led their hounds as hawks perched on all their shoulders. They hauled fire cannons<sup>4</sup> in baskets. They had also eagles most fierce, 100s of poles with birdlimes, and thousands of forks to catch rabbits; dragnets like those used by bullheads and lassos tossed by King Yama. They yelled and shrieked altogether causing confusion far and near.* When the Great Sage saw those men swarming up his mountain, he became terribly angry. Making the magic sign with his fingers and reciting a spell, he drew in a breath facing the southwest and blew it out. At once a violent wind arose. Marvellous wind! *It threw up dust and scattered dirt; it toppled trees and cut down forests. The ocean waves rose like mountains; they crashed fold upon fold on the shore. The cosmos grew dim and darkened; the sun and the moon lost their light. The pine trees, once shaken, roared like tigers; the bamboos hit abruptly, sounded like dragons. All Heaven’s pores let loose their angry breaths as rocks and sand flew, hurting 1 and all.* The Great Sage called up this mighty wind that blew up and scattered those rock pieces in every direction. *Pity those thousand-odd hunters and horses! This was what happened to every 1 of them: the rocks broke their dark heads to pieces; <sup>5</sup>flying sand hurt all the winged horses. Lords and nobles confounded before the peak, blood stained like cinnabar the earth. Dads and sons could not go home. Could fine men to their houses return? Corpses fell to the dust and lay on the mountain while rouged ladies at home waited.*

The poem says:

Men killed, horses’ dead – how could they go home?  
Lost, lonely souls floundered like tangled hemp.  
Pity those strong and virile fighting men whose blood, both good and bad, did stain the sand!

Lowering the direction of his cloud, the Great Sage clapped his hands and roared with laughter, saying, “Lucky! Lucky! Since I made submission to the Tang Monk and became a priest, he has been giving me this advice: ‘Do good a thousand days but the good is still insufficient; do evil for one day and that evil is already excessive.’ Some truth indeed! When I followed him and killed a few monsters, he would blame me for perpetrating violence. Today I came home and it was the merest trifle to finish off all these hunters.”

He then shouted, “Little ones, come out!” When those monkeys saw that the violent wind had passed and heard the Great Sage calling, they all jumped out. “Go down to the south side of the mountain,” said the Great Sage, “and strip the dead hunters of their clothes. Bring them back home, wash away the bloodstains, and you all can wear them to ward off the cold. The corpses you can push into the deep mountain lake over there. Pull back here also the horses that are killed; their hides can be used to make boots, and their meat can be cured for us to enjoy slowly. Gather up the bows and arrows, the swords and spears, and you can use them for military drills again. And finally, bring me those banners of miscellaneous colours; I’ve use for them.”

Every one of the monkeys obeyed these instructions. Pulling down the banners and washing them clean, the Great Sage then patched them together into a large banner of many colours, on which he wrote the following words in large letters: The Flower-Fruit Mountain Rebuilt, the Water-Curtain Cave Restored – Great Sage Equal to Heaven. A flagpole was erected outside the cave to hang up the banner. Thereafter, he gathered together more fiends and beasts by the day and he stored up all kinds of foodstuff. The word *monk* was never mentioned again. As he enjoyed wide friendship and great power, he had no trouble in borrowing some sweet, divine water from the Dragon Kings of the Four Oceans to wash his mountain and make it green again. He next planted elms and willows in

front, pines and cedars in the back; peach, pear, date, and plum – he had them all. He then settled down to enjoy life without a care. The Tang Monk listened to Crafty Nature and banished the Monkey of the Mind. He mounted his horse to head for the West as 8 Rules led the way in front while Sand-monk poled the luggage in the rear. After they passed the White Tiger Ridge, they came upon a large forest, full of vines and creepers, green pines and cedars. “Disciples,” said Tripitaka, “the mountain road is already rough and difficult to negotiate. And now we’ve a thick and dark pine forest. Do be careful. I fear that we may run into some fiends or monstrous beasts.” But look at Idiot! Rousing his energies, he told Sand-monk to take hold of the horse while he himself used his muckrake to open up a path in front and led the Tang Monk directly into the pine forest. As they journeyed, the elder stopped the horse and said, “Eight Rules, I’m getting really hungry today. Where can you find me some vegetarian food to eat?”

“Please dismount, Master,” said 8 Rules, “and let Old bull go find some for you.” The elder descended from his horse. Sand-monk put down his load and took out the alms bowl to hand over to 8 Rules. 8 Rules said, “I’m off!”

“Where to?” asked the elder.

“Never mind,” said 8 Rules. “Once I go, I’ll *drill ice for fire<sup>6</sup> to find your maigre and press snow for oil to beg your rice.*” *Look at him!* He left the pine forest and walked toward the West for over ten miles but he did not come upon even a single household. It was truly a place more inhabited by tigers and wolves than by humans. When Idiot became tired from walking, he thought to himself, “When Pilgrim’s here, whatever that old priest wanted he got. Today, it’s my turn to serve and it’s like what the proverb says: *you know the cost of rice and firewood when you run a house; you realise your parents’ kindness when you bring up a child!* Where in the world can I go to beg for food?” He walked some more and became rather drowsy. He thought to himself, “If I go back now and tell that old priest that there’s no place here for me to beg for vegetarian food even after travelling all this distance, he’ll not believe me. I must find some means to while away another hour or so before I go back to answer him. Well, well! Let’s take a nap here in the grass.”

Idiot indeed put his head in the grass and lay down. At the time, he thought that he would doze for a while and then get up but little did he realise how fatigued he was from all that walking. Once he lay down his head, he fell into a deep, snoring slumber. The elder in the forest grew so restless and anxious that his ears became flushed and his eyes began to tic. He turned quickly and said to Sand-monk, “Why’s not Aware of Ability returned from his trip to beg for food?”

“Master,” said Sand-monk, “don’t you understand? When he sees how many families there’re in this region of the West who love to feed monks, he’s not going to worry about you especially when he’s so large a stomach! He’s not going to come back until he’s completely filled!”

“You’re right,” said Tripitaka. “But if he’s staying at some place just to satisfy his hankering for food where’re we going to meet him? It’s getting late, and this is no place to live. We better find some lodging.”

“Don’t worry, master,” said Sand-monk, “you sit here and let me find him.”

“Yes, yes,” said Tripitaka, “it doesn’t matter whether there’s food or not. But it’s important for us to find a place to stay.” Grasping his precious staff, Sand-monk left the pine forest to search for 8 Rules. The elder, sitting alone in the forest, became so weary and fatigued that he had to force himself to summon enough energy to get up. Putting the luggage together in a pile and tying the horse to a tree, he took off his wide splint hat, stuck his priestly staff into the ground, and straightened his clerical robe in order to take a walk in this secluded forest just to rid himself of his depression. He looked at all the wild grass and untended flowers but he did not hear any chattering of birds heading homeward. The forest was a place of tall grass and small paths. Because he was rather confused he soon lost his way. He had, to be sure, wanted to dispel his boredom in the first place, and to find 8 Rules and Sand-monk in the second. Little did he realise that they were proceeding westward whereas he himself after going in circles for a while was heading south. As he emerged from the pine forest, he raised his head and saw all at once flashes of golden light and colourful mists ahead of him. He looked more carefully and found that it was a bejewelled pagoda whose golden dome was gleaming in the rays of the setting sun. “This disciple truly has no affinity!” he said to himself. “When I left the Land of the East, I made a vow to burn incense in every temple, to worship God when I saw an image of God, and to sweep a pagoda if I came upon a pagoda. Isn’t that a golden pagoda that is so brilliant over there? Why didn’t I take this road before? Beneath the pagoda there must be a temple, inside of which there must also be a monastery. Let me walk over there. It’s all right, I suppose, to leave the white horse and the luggage here since there is no one passing by. If there’s any space there, I’ll wait till my disciples return and we can all ask for lodging for the night.”

*Alas, the time of that elder’s misfortune’s indeed arrived! Look at him!* He strode forward and went up to the side of the pagoda. There he saw boulders *10000 feet tall; a large bluff reaching the green sky: its roots joining the thick earth, its peaks sticking into Heaven. Several thousand trees of all kinds on both sides; 100 miles of snarled creepers front and back. Bright flowers on grass tips, the wind had its shadows. In flowing water’s parted clouds the moon had no root. <sup>7</sup>Fallen logs rested in deep streams; dried tendrils entangled bare summits. Beneath a stone bridge flowed a bubbling clear stream; on top of a terrace grew flour-like white blossoms. When seen from afar it seemed the Paradise of 3 Isles; when one drew near it appeared like the lovely Penglai. Purple bamboos and scented pines enclosed the mountain brook; crows, magpies, and monkeys cut through the rugged ridge. Outside a cave there were herds of wild beasts coming and going; in the woods there were flocks of birds leaving or returning. In lovely green the fragrant plants thrived; radiantly the wild flowers bloomed. This region nonetheless<sup>8</sup> was an evil place. It was the elder’s bad luck to come barging in!* The elder strode up to the door of the pagoda and found a mottled bamboo curtain hanging inside. Walking inside the door, he lifted up the curtain to proceed further when suddenly he saw before him a monster asleep on a stone couch. He looked with *indigo face, long white fangs, and a big gaping mouth!* *Tousled hair on the head’s 2 sides seemed as if it had been dyed red by rouge. A few stubs of deep purple beard bore the look of lychee sprouting. A nose curved like a parrot’s beak and eyes glowing like the morning stars. His 2 huge fists had the shape of a monk’s alms bowl. 2 blue-veined feet forked like branches dangling down a cliff. Half covered by a light yellow robe, better than the silk-brocade cassock, he still grasped a scimitar that gleamed and glittered. He slept on a slab of stone both flawless and smooth. He had led young fiends to make formations like ants and old demons to rule with order like bees. Look at his awesome bearing when all his subjects raised the cry, “Sire!” He had made the moon his third friend as he sipped his juice; <sup>9</sup>felt the wind grow beneath his arms as tea was poured. Look at his vast magic power! In the twinkling of an eye he could tour all the Heavens. In his wild woods screeched birds and fowls; in dens slept dragons and snakes. Mortals tilled his fields to grow white jade; Daoists calmed his fire to raise cinnabar. A door of a small cave did not of course lead to the Hell, Avici; but such an ugly monster seemed truly a bull-headed Nature spirit!* When the elder saw that kind of appearance, he retreated in horror as his body turned numb and his legs flabby. He tried to turn and run but just as he got out of the door, the monster who was a rather alert creature, opened his demonic eyes with golden pupils and shouted, “Little ones, go see who’s outside our door!”

A little fiend stuck his head out the door and saw that it was a bald-headed elder. He ran quickly inside and reported, “Great King! It’s a priest outside. He’s a round head and a large face with two ears hanging down to his shoulders. He’s a body full of tender flesh and very fine skin. He’s a good-looking priest!”

When the monster heard these words, he laughed aloud saying, “This is like what the proverb says: *flies atop a serpent’s head – food by itself presented!* You, little ones. Chase him down and bring him back here. I’ve great rewards for you.”

Those little fiends rushed out of the door like a swarm of bees. When Tripitaka saw them, his mind wanted him to move like an arrow and his feet wanted to fly; but he quivered and shook, and his feet were numb and flaccid. Moreover, the mountain road was rugged, the forest was dark, and it was getting late. *How’d he possibly move fast enough?* The little fiends ran him down and hauled him back bodily. Truly, it is like the *dragon in shallow water teased by shrimps, the tiger on level ground mocked by dogs. A noble venture may have many snags. Who’s like the Tang Monk when he faces the West? Look at those little fiends!* After having carried the elder back and put him down outside the bamboo curtain, they ran happily to make this report: “Great King, we’ve caught the monk and brought him back.”

The old monster stole a glance at Tripitaka and saw that he had an erect head and a handsome face. He was indeed a good-looking priest. The monster thought to himself, “Such a good-looking priest must be someone from a noble nation. I can’t treat him lightly. If I didn’t show him who’s boss here, he’d willingly submit to me?” Like a fox affecting the authority of a tiger, he all at once bristled up his red hairs and whiskers while his eyes split wide open. “Bring that monk in!” he bellowed.

“Yes, sir!” the various fiends shouted in response as they shoved Tripitaka inside.

As the proverb has it: *Standing beneath low-pitched eaves, how’d one not salute?* Tripitaka had no choice but to fold his hands and greet him. “From what region are you, monk?” demanded the monster. “Where did you come from? Where’re you going? Tell us quickly!”

“I’m a monk from the Tang court,” said Tripitaka. “Having received the imperial decree of the Great Tang Emperor to seek scriptures in the West, I passed by your noble mountain and decided to seek an audience with the sage beneath this pagoda. I’ve no intention to disturb Your Eminence. Please forgive me. When I return to the Land of the East after acquiring scriptures in the West, your illustrious name will be recorded gratefully for posterity.”

When the monster heard these words, he roared with laughter, saying, “I said to myself that you’re from a noble nation. So you’re indeed! You’re exactly the person I want to eat! It’s marvellous that you presented yourself here. Otherwise, I might have missed you. You’re ordained to be the food of my mouth. Since you’ve barged in here all by yourself, I’d not let you go even if I wanted to. And you’d not escape even if you wanted to!” He then ordered the little fiends, “Tie up that monk.” The little fiends rushed forward and fastened the elder firmly with ropes to the Spirit-Soothing Pillar.<sup>10</sup>

Grasping his scimitar, the old monster asked again, “Monk, how many persons are there in your entourage? Don’t tell me you dare go up to the Western Heaven all by yourself!” When Tripitaka saw him picking up the scimitar, he said candidly, “Great King, I’ve two disciples named Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk. They all left the pine forest to go beg for food. I’ve, moreover, one load of luggage and a white horse that I left in the forest.”

“That’s luckier yet!” said the old monster. “Two disciples including you make three, and there are really four of you if we count the horse. That’s enough for a meal!”

“Let’s go and catch them too,” said the little fiends. “Don’t go out,” said the old monster, “but shut the door instead. After begging the food, those disciples would bring it to their master; when they can’t find him, they will surely come seeking right up to our door. The proverb says, ‘Business at one’s own door is easier to do.’ Let’s take our time and catch them then.” The little fiends indeed closed the front door.

Tripitaka met disaster; Sand-monk left the pine forest looking for 8 Rules. He walked for over ten miles but did not see even a village or hamlet. He went up to a knoll to look all around when suddenly he heard someone speaking in the grass down below. Pushing the tall grass apart hurriedly with his staff, he found Idiot inside talking in his sleep. Sand-monk gave one of the huge ears a hard tug and cried, “Dear Idiot! Master told you to beg for food. Did he give you permission to sleep here?” Idiot woke up with a start, mumbling, “Brother, what time is it?”

“Get up, quick!” said Sand-monk. “Master said that it didn’t matter whether there was food or not. He told us to try finding a place to stay instead.”

Picking up the alms bowl and toting his muckrake, Idiot walked back stupidly with Sand-monk. When they reached the forest, their master was nowhere to be seen. Sand-monk began to berate him, saying, “It’s all because of you, Idiot, for taking such a long time to find some food. Master must have been seized by a monster.”

“Brother,” said 8 Rules, laughing, “don’t talk nonsense. This forest is a pure, lovely place and it definitely cannot harbour a monster. It must be that that old priest cannot sit still and has gone sightseeing somewhere. Let’s go find him.” The two of them picked up the hat and the priestly staff before they left the pine forest, leading the horse and poling the luggage as they searched for their master.

It happened that the Tang Monk at this time was not yet destined to die. Having looked for him for some time to no avail, his two disciples saw beams of golden light coming from the south. “Brother,” said 8 Rules, “the blessed will only receive more blessings! Master must have gone to that bejewelled pagoda over there that is giving off that light. Who will dare to be inhospitable at a place like that? They must insist on preparing vegetarian food and his staying to enjoy it. Why aren’t we moving? We’d get there and have something, too.”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “you can’t tell whether it’s a good place or not. Let’s go and have a look first.” The two of them walked boldly up to the door of the edifice and found that it was closed. Across the top of the door was a slab of white jade on which were written in large letters the following words: Casserole Mountain, Current-Moon Cave.

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “this is no monastery. It’s a cave-dwelling of a monster. Even if Master were here, I doubt if we’d see him.”

“Don’t be alarmed, Brother,” said 8 Rules. “Tie up the horse and stand guard over our luggage. Let me question them.” Holding high his muckrake, Idiot went forward and shouted, “Open the door! Open the door!” The little fiend who was standing guard inside opened the door. When he saw the two of them, he ran quickly to report, “Great King, business is here.”

“What sort of business?” asked the old monster.

“There is a monk with large ears and a long mouth outside our cave,” replied the little fiend, “and there’s also another monk with the gloomiest appearance. They came calling at our door.”

Greatly pleased, the old monster said, “They’ve to be Bullseye Eight Rules and Sand-monk! Ho-ho! They know where to look all right! How did they manage to find our door so swiftly? Well, if they appear so audacious, let’s not treat them casually. Bring me my armour!”

The little fiend brought it out and helped him put it on. Grasping the scimitar, the old monster walked out of the door. 8 Rules and Sand-monk were waiting outside the door when they saw this savage fiend emerge. He had *green face, red beard, and floppy scarlet hair. His yellow gold cuirass both sparkled and gleamed. A belt inlaid with ribbed shells wrapped his waist; a silk sash wound tightly round his armoured chest. The wind howled when he stood idly on the mount; the waves chumed when he glumly roamed the seas. A pair of hands with veins both brown and blue grasped firmly the soul-snatching scimitar. If you’d learn this creature’s given name, remember Yellow Robe, 2 famous words.* That Old Monster Yellow Robe came out of the door and asked at once, “Where are you from, monk, that you dare cause this racket before my door?”

“My child,” said 8 Rules, “don’t you recognise me? I’m your venerable dad! I’m one sent by the Great Tang to go to the Western Heaven, for my master happens to be the royal brother, Tipitaka. If he’s in your house, send him out at once. That’ll spare me having to level it with my rake!”

"Yes, yes," said the fiend with a laugh, "there's a Tang Monk in my house, and I've not denied him any hospitality either. I was just preparing some buns filled with human flesh for him to enjoy. You two can go inside and have one also. How about it?"

Idiot indeed would have gone inside immediately if Sand-monk had not pulled him back, saying, "Elder Brother, he's deceiving you. Since when did you start eating human flesh again?"

Only then did Idiot realise his mistake. Raising his muckrake, he brought it down hard on the monster's face. The monster stepped aside to dodge the blow and then turned to meet him with uplifted scimitar. The 2 of them summoning their magic powers, mounted the clouds to fight in mid-air. Sand-monk abandoned the luggage and the white horse; wielding his precious staff, he joined the fray also. At this time, two fierce monks and one brazen monster began a savage battle on the edge of the clouds. Thus it was that *the staff rose high, met by the scimitar; the muckrake came blocked by the scimitar. 1 demon warrior used his power; 2 divine monks displayed their might. The nine-pronged rake, how truly heroic! The fiend-routing staff, ferocious indeed! Their blows fell left and right, in front and back but squire Yellow Robe showed no fear at all. See his steel scimitar shining like silver! And in truth, his magic power was great. They fought till all the sky was fogbound and beclouded; and in mid-mountain stones cracked and cliff sides collapsed. This one for the sake of his fame, how'd he give up? That one for the sake of his master would surely show no fear.* The 3 of them closed in repeatedly in mid-air for scores of times but a decision could not be reached. Though each of them cared for his life, none of them was about to be separated.

029

Free of his peril, River Float arrives at the kingdom; Receiving favour, 8 Rules invades the forest

The poem says:

Vain thoughts cannot be slain by force.  
Why must you seek after Suchness?  
Refine before God your self-existent mind – aren't illusion and enlightenment the same?  
Enlightened, you reach instantly the Right; deluded, you sink in 10000 kalpas.  
If you can cultivate 1 thought with Truth, sins vast as Ganges' sand are wiped out.

8 Rules and Sand-monk fought with that monster for over 30 rounds but a decision could not be reached. Because if it were a matter of matching abilities, you needn't speak of two monks. Even if there were twenty monks, they would still be unable to withstand that monster. It was only because of the fact that the Tang Monk was not yet fated to die that his followers could count on the help of certain deities. 8 Rules and Sand-monk, therefore, were assisted in secret in the air by the Six Gods of Light and Six Gods of Darkness, the Guardians of Five Quarters, the Four Sentinels, and the Eighteen Guardian-Spirits of monasteries. The elder was weeping piteously in the cave and thinking about his disciples. As tears fell from his eyes, he said to himself, "Aware of Ability, I don't know in which village you've met a friend of truth and are enjoying being fed. O, Awakened to Purity! Where have you gone to search for him, and how will you be able to meet him? Will you two realise that I met a demon that I'm suffering here? When'll I see you both again? When'll I escape from this great ordeal so that I can reach the Spirit Mountain soon?" As he was giving voice to his grief in this manner, he suddenly saw a woman walk out from inside the cave. Holding on to the Spirit-Soothing Pillar, she said, "Elder where did you come from? Why are you bound here by him?"

When the elder heard this, he turned his teary eyes to steal a glance at her and found that she was about thirty years old. "Nun," he said, "no need for further questions. I must have been fated to die when I entered your door. If you want to devour me, go ahead. Why bother to question me?" The woman said, "I don't eat people! About three hundred miles west of here is my home, a city by the name of the Precious Image Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> I'm the third princess of its king, and my childhood name is Hundred Flowers' Shame. Thirteen years ago, on the eve of the fifteenth of the eighth month, I was enjoying the sight of the moon when this monster-spirit kidnapped me and brought me here in a violent wind. I was forced to become his wife for all these thirteen years and to bear his children. It was impossible, of course, for me to send any news back to the Court, and I'd not see my parents even though I thought of them frequently. But where did you come from, and how did he catch you?"

"This poor monk," said the Tang Monk, "is someone sent to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. I was taking a walk when I bumped into this place. Now he wants to catch my two disciples also so that we'll all be steamed and eaten together."

"Elder, please don't worry," said the princess with a smile. "If you're a scripture pilgrim, I can save you, for the Precious Image Kingdom is right on your main path to the West. All I ask of you is to deliver a letter for me to my parents and I'll ask my husband to let you go."

Nodding his head, the Tang Monk said, "Nun, if you can save the life of this poor monk, I'll be glad to serve as your messenger."

Quickly running inside, the princess wrote a letter and had it properly sealed. She then went back out to the pillar and untied him before handing him the letter. After he was freed, the Tang Monk held the letter in his hands and said, "Nun, thank you for saving my life. When this poor monk reaches your kingdom, he will certainly deliver the letter to the king. I fear however, that such a lengthy separation will make it difficult for your parents to recognise anything from you. What shall I do then? They would not accuse me of lying, would they?"

"No fear," said the princess. "My parents have no son; all they have are us three sisters. When they see this letter, they will look after you." Tucking the letter deep into his sleeve, Tripitaka thanked the princess again and started to walk out. "You can't go out the front door!" said the princess, tugging at him. "Those monster-spirits, great and small, are all outside waving the banners and beating the drums and gongs to assist the Great King who is at this very moment fighting with your disciples. You'd better leave by the back door. If the Great King seizes you, he will at least interrogate you. But if the little fiends catch hold of you, they may slaughter you on the spot without further ado. Let me go instead to the front and speak a word on your behalf. If the Great King is willing to let you go, your disciples can take that as a favour and leave with you."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he respected to the princess before taking leave of her. After walking out of the back door, he dared not proceed; instead, he hid himself in some bushes and waited. The princess had devised a clever plan. She ran out the front door and pushed her way through the vast throng of monsters. All she could hear was the jangle of weapons, for 8 Rules and Sand-monk were still doing battle in mid-air with that fiend. The princess shouted, "Lord Yellow Robe!"

When the monster king heard the call of the princess, he abandoned 8 Rules and Sand-monk and dropped down from the clouds. Holding his scimitar with 1 hand, he took the hand of the princess with the other and said, " Mistress, what do you want?"

"Husband," said the princess, "I was sleeping just now within the silk curtains, and I saw in my dream a golden-armoured deity."

"That golden-armoured deity," said the demon, "what does he want at my door?" The princess said, "During my youth when I was living in the palace, I made a secret vow that if I found a good husband, I'd ascend the famous mountains, visit the mortal abodes, and feed the monks. Since I married you, ours had been such great happiness that I never had the opportunity to mention this to you. Just now that golden-armoured deity came to demand that I fulfil my vow; he was shouting at me so vehemently that I woke up with a start. Even though it was all a dream, I made haste to come to tell you about it. Then I saw a monk all tied up on that pillar. I beg you, husband, to be compassionate for my sake and spare that monk. Just regard the matter as if it were my feeding the monks to redeem my vow. Are you willing?"

" Mistress," said the fiend, "you're so gullible! I thought it was something important! All right! If I wanted to eat humans, I can catch a few anywhere. This one monk, what does he amount to? I'll let him go."

"Husband," said the princess, "let him go out the back door."

The monster said, "What nuisance! Just let him go. Why bother about the back door or front door?" He gripped his steel scimitar and shouted, "You, Bullseye 8 Rules! Come over here! I'm not afraid of you but I'll fight with you no more; for the sake of my wife, I'm going to spare your master. Go quickly to our back door and find him so that you can leave for the West. If you ever trespass our territory again, I'll not spare you."

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk heard these words, they felt as if they had been released from the gate of Hell! Leading the horse and poling the luggage, they darted like rodents past the Current-Moon Cave. When they reached the back door, they cried, "Master!"

The elder recognised their voices and answered from the thorny bushes. Sand-monk parted the grass and picked up his master who mounted the horse hurriedly. So, *almost harmed by the vicious blue-faced spirit, he met by luck the zeal of Hundred Flowers' Shame. The scorpion has escaped from the golden hook: he wags his head and tail to swim with the waves.* 8 Rules led the way in front while Sand-monk brought up the rear. They left the pine forest and proceeded on the main road. Look at the two of them! Still bickering and grumbling, they were trying to put the blame on each other, and Tripitaka had to spend all the time attempting to pacify them. At night they sought a place to rest; when the cock crowed they looked at the sky. Stage by stage, they soon travelled some 299 miles. When they raised their heads one day, they saw a beautiful city. It was the Precious Image Kingdom, a marvellous place indeed! *How boundless the clouds! How vast the journey! Though the land is a thousand miles away, its condition is no less prosperous.* <sup>3</sup>*Auspicious mist and smoke surround it; bright moon and clear wind befriend it. Green, towering distant mountains spread out like a painted scroll; the flowing stream, surging and bubbling, throws up pieces of white jade. Arable fields, joined by roadways and paths; worthy of food, dense sprouting rice crops; hooked by the angler, three winding brooks of a few households; gathered by the woodsman, one load of pepper-wood from 2 hills. Each corridor and each rampart are made strong as if by metal and liquid;* <sup>4</sup>*every house and every home vies with one another in felicity. Nine-tiered towers rise like palace halls; layered terraces soar like beacons. There are also the Great Ultimate Hall, the Bright Cover Hall, the Burn Incense Hall, the Text-Viewing Hall, the Policy-Proclaiming Hall, and the Talent-Engaging Hall – every hall lined with jade threshold and gold steps with civil and military officials. There are also the Great Light Palace, the Bright Sun Palace, the Long-Lasting Pleasure Palace, the Bright Clear Palace, the Memorial-Establishing Palace, and the Never-Ending Palace – each palace with its chimes, drums, pipes, and vertical flutes releases its boudoir sorrows and springtime griefs. There are in the forbidden courtyard young, fresh faces like flowers bedewed; there are on the palace moat slender waists like willows dancing in the wind. On the broad boulevard there may be one who is capped and sashed who elaborately dressed, mounts a 5-horse chariot. At a secluded spot there may be one holding bow and arrows who pushing through fog and clouds, would pierce a pair of hawks.* <sup>5</sup>*Alleys of flowers and willows; towers of pipes and strings: spring breeze here's no lighter than at Luoyang Bridge! Our scripture-seeking elder recalls the Tang court and his bowels almost burst; our disciples, flanking their master, rest in a posthouse and lose their souls in dreams.* There was no end to the sight of such fine scenery at the Precious Image Kingdom. Master and disciples, the three of them, brought the luggage and the horse to a posthouse and rested. Afterwards, the Tang Monk walked to the gate of the court and said to the gate official, "A priest from the Tang court has arrived to seek an audience with the throne and to have my travel rescript certified. Please make this report for me." The Custodian of the Yellow Gate hurried inside and went before the white jade steps to say, "Your Majesty, there is an illustrious monk from the Tang court who wishes to have an audience with you in order to have his travel rescript certified." When the king heard that an illustrious monk had arrived from such a great nation as the Tang, he was very pleased and consented at once. "Summon him to come in," he said. When Tripitaka was summoned before the golden steps, he went through an elaborate court ceremony to pay homage to the ruler. None of the civil and military officials lining up on both sides of the court could refrain from saying, "Truly a man from a noble nation! What exquisite manners!" The king said, "Elder, why did you come to our Kingdom?"

"This humble monk's," said Tripitaka, "a Religious from the Tang court. I've received the decree of my emperor to go to acquire scriptures in the West. The travel rescript that I originally received should be certified once I arrive at the kingdom of Your Majesty. This is the reason why I dare intrude upon your Dragon Presence."

"If you've the rescript from the Tang Son of Heaven," said the king, "bring it up here for me to look at." Presenting it with both hands Tripitaka placed the document on the imperial desk and unfolded it. The rescript says:

The travel rescript of the Tang Son of Heaven who succeeds under the guidance of Heaven to the throne of the Great Tang Empire in the South Jambūdvīpa Continent. Though we humbly acknowledge our poor display of virtue, we're the lawful descendant of a great heritage. In the service to the gods and the government of men, we try to be vigilant night and day, as if we're approaching a deep abyss or walking on thin ice. Some time ago, we failed to save the life of the Old Dragon of Jing River, for which we're chastised by the Most High August One. Our soul and spirit, drifting to the Region of Darkness, had already become a guest of impermanence. Because our allotted age was not yet exhausted however, we're indebted to the Ruler of Darkness who released us and returned us to life. Thereafter, we convened a grand mass and established the ritual field for the dead. It was at this time also that the One who saves from afflictions, the Nun Guanshiyin, revealed to us her golden form, and enlightened us with the knowledge that the West had both God and scriptures, able to redeem the dead and deliver the orphaned spirits. For this reason we now commission Xuanzang, master of the law, to traverse 1000 mountains in order to acquire such scriptures. When he reaches the many nations of the West, it is our hope that they will not extinguish the goodly affinity and allow him to pass through because of this rescript. This is a necessary-to-be-sent document.<sup>7</sup> An auspicious day in the autumn of the 13<sup>th</sup> year in the Zhenguan period of the Great Tang.

An imperial document. (There were also the marks of nine precious seals on it.) When the king read it, he took the jade seal of his own nation and stamped it before handing it back to Tripitaka. After he thanked the king and put away the travel rescript, Tripitaka said, "This humble priest came first of all to have the document certified and secondly to present to Your Majesty a family letter."

Delighted, the king said, "What kind of family letter?"

"Your Majesty," said Tripitaka, "the third princess's kidnapped by the Yellow Robe Fiend of the Current-Moon Cave at the Casserole Mountain. This humble priest met her by chance and she asked me to send you this letter."

When the king heard this, his eyes brimmed with tears. "Thirteen years ago," he said, "we lost our princess. For that, we banished countless officials, both civil and military, and we didn't know how many ladies-in-waiting and eunuchs we'd caned to death throughout the palace. For we thought that she had walked out of the palace and lost her way. Since we didn't know where to look, we interrogated countless households in the city but there's not a trace of her. How'd we know that a monster had kidnapped her? When I receive this word today, I can't hold back my grief or tears." There-

upon Tripitaka took out the letter from his sleeve and presented it. When the king took it and saw the address on the envelope, his hands turned feeble and could not open the letter. He therefore gave the order to have the Grand Secretary of the Hanlin Academy<sup>8</sup> come before the throne and read the letter. The Grand Secretary ascended the steps as all the civil and military officials before the court and all the imperial concubines and palace ladies behind the court listened attentively. Opening the letter, the Grand Secretary began to read:

The un-filial daughter, Hundred Flowers' Shame, touches her head to the ground a hundred times before the Dragon-Phoenix Palace to honour Dad King of the highest virtue. Long may he live! I salute also before the Bright Sun Palace to my Queen Mum, Queen of the Three Palaces, and to all worthy ministers, both civil and military, of the entire court. Ever since it was my good fortune to have been born into the queen's palace, I've been indebted to you for the countless acts of grievous labour you undertook on my behalf. I regret that I've not done the utmost to please you, nor have I discharged with all my strength my filial duties. It was on the fifteenth day of the eighth month thirteen years ago that Dad King, on that lovely evening and auspicious occasion, gave his gracious command for banquets to be prepared in the several palaces so that we might enjoy the moonlight and celebrate the glorious Festival of Immaculate Heavens. During the moment of festivity, a sudden gust of fragrant wind<sup>9</sup> brought forward a demon king with golden pupils, indigo face, and green hair who took hold of your daughter. Mounting the auspicious luminosity, he carried me away directly to an uninhabited region midway in the mountain and absolutely forbade me to leave. He exploited his fiendish power and forced me to become his wife; I'd no alternative but to suffer such ignominy for these thirteen years. Two monster children were born to me, all seeds of this fiend. To speak of this in fact is to corrupt the great human relations and to pervert our morals. I'd not, therefore, send you such an offensive and insulting letter but I fear that there would be no explanation should your daughter pass away. As I was thinking of my parents with deep sorrow, I learned that a holy monk from the Tang court was also taken captive by the demon king. It was then that your daughter wrote this letter in tears and made bold to obtain release for the priest, so that he might deliver this small document as an expression of my heart. I beg Dad King in his compassion to send his noble generals quickly to capture the Yellow Robe Fiend at the Current-Moon Cave of the Casserole Mountain and bring your daughter back to the court. Yours will be the deepest favour to me. Please pardon my disrespect in writing this letter in haste, and whatever has not been said I hope to tell you face to face. Your disobedient daughter, Hundred Flowers' Shame, respects repeatedly.

When the Grand Secretary finished reading the letter, the king burst into loud wailing; all the three palaces shed tears and the various officials were also overborne by grief.

After the king had wept for a long time, he asked the two rows of civil and military officials, "Who dares lead the troops and captains to capture the monster for us and rescue our Hundred Flowers princess?" He asked the question several times but there was not a single person courageous enough to respond. Like generals carved out of wood and ministers molded with clay, they all turned dumb! Sorely distressed, the king wept till tears streamed down his face whereupon many officials saluted themselves and memorialised, saying, "Your Majesty, we beseech you to desist from your sorrow. The princess was lost, and for thirteen years there had been no news from her. Although she met by chance the holy monk from the Tang court so that she was able to send us this letter, we're still not fully informed about her situation. Moreover, your subjects are merely mortal creatures. We've studied military manuals and tactics, of course but our knowledge is limited to placing troops in formations and pitching camps in order to protect the frontiers of our nation from any invasion. The monster-spirit however, is someone who comes by the fog and goes with the clouds. Unless we'd meet him face to face, how could we attack him and rescue the princess? The scripture pilgrim from the Land of the East is, we believe, a holy monk from a noble nation. As a priest *whose vast power tames dragons and tigers, great virtue awes demons and gods*, he must know the art of subduing monsters. As the proverb says, *he who comes and tells of some affair's himself involved in that affair*.

Let's ask this elder to subdue the monster and rescue our princess; this is our safest policy."

When the king heard these words, he turned quickly to Tripitaka and said, "Elder, if you've the ability to release your religion power and catch the monster so that my child can return to the court, you need not go worship God in the West. You can let your hair grow again, for we'll become bond-brothers with you. You may sit on the dragon couch with us and enjoy our riches together. How about it?"

"This poor monk," said Tripitaka hurriedly, "knows a little of reciting the name of God but truly he does not know how to subdue monsters."

"If you don't," said the king, "how dare you go seek God in the Western Heaven?" No longer able to hide the truth, the elder had to mention his two disciples. "Your Majesty," he said, "your poor monk would find it very difficult indeed to come here if he were all by himself. I've however, two disciples, most capable of opening up a pathway in the mountains and building bridges when we come upon the rivers. They have accompanied me here."

"You're an insensitive monk," said the king, chiding him. "If you've disciples, why did you not bring them to see us also? When they enter my court, even if we'd no intention to reward them, we'd provide at least some food." Tripitaka said, "The disciples of this poor monk are rather ugly in their appearances, and they dare not enter the court without permission. For I fear that they might cause too great a shock to your Majesty."

"Look at how this monk talks," said the king with a laugh. "Do you think really that we'll be afraid of them?"

"It's hard to tell," said Tripitaka. "My elder disciple has the surname of Bullseye, and his given names are Aware of Ability and 8 Rules. He has a long horn and fanglike teeth, tough bristles on the back of his head, and huge, fanlike ears. He is coarse and husky, and he causes even the wind to rise when he walks. My second disciple has the surname of Sha, and his religious names are Awakened to Purity and Monk. He is twelve feet tall and three span wide across his shoulders. His face is like indigo, his mouth, a butcher's bowl; his eyes gleam and his teeth seem a row of nails. With looks like those, how could they dare enter the court without permission?"

"Since you've now given them a thorough description," said the king, "we'd not be afraid of them. Summon them in." He then gave the order that an invitation by a golden plaque should be sent at once to the posthouse.

When Idiot saw the invitation, he said to Sand-monk, "Brother, you're saying previously that we'd perhaps not deliver that letter. Now you can see what benefits delivering that letter can bring. It must be that after Master had delivered the letter, the king said that a messenger should not be lightly treated and insisted on giving a banquet for him. He has no stomach for that sort of thing but at least he's considerate toward the two of us by mentioning our names. That's why a golden plaque has been sent to invite us. Let's go and have a good meal then, and we can leave tomorrow."

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "we still don't know the true reason for this. Let's go and find out." They therefore turned over the luggage and the horse to the care of the posthouse master. Taking their weapons with them, they followed the golden plaque into court and went before the white jade steps. Standing on the left and on the right, they made one salute and then remained erect without moving again. Every member of those civil and military officials was deeply shaken. "These two monks," they said, "are not only ugly, they are downright uncouth! How could they see our king and not salute themselves? After 1 salute, they just stand there and remain erect. It's preposterous! It's preposterous!" 8 Rules heard this and he said, "Don't complain, all of you. That's how we're! At first glance, we may appear ugly but after a while, you'll get used to us."

When the king saw how hideous they were, he was immediately frightened. By the time he heard what Idiot had said, he was shaking so hard that he fell down from his dragon couch. Fortunately, there were attendants nearby who took hold of him and helped him up. The Tang Monk was so terrified that he knelt before the court and respected without ceasing, saying, "Your Majesty, this monk deserves ten thousand deaths, ten thousand deaths! I said that my disciples were ugly and that they should not be granted an audience because it might injure your dragon body. Now, they have indeed alarmed the Throne." Still trembling, the king went forward to raise up the priest, saying, "Elder, it's a good thing that you told me about them before. If you hadn't, the sudden sight of them would have scared me to death!"

After he had calmed down, the king said, "Elder Bullseye and Elder Sha that one of you is good at subduing monsters?" Foolishly Idiot answered, "Old bull knows how."

"In what way?" asked the king. "I'm the Marshal of the Heavenly Reeds," said 8 Rules. "Because I transgressed Heaven's decree, I fell to the Region Below where luckily I'd embrace the truth and become a monk. Since our journey from the Land of the East, I've been the one most capable of subduing monsters." The king said, "If you're a celestial warrior who has descended to Earth, you must know very well the magic of transformation."

"I'd not boast," said 8 Rules, "but I do know a few little tricks."

"Try to change into something for me to have a look," said the king. 8 Rules said, "Give me a subject, and I'll change into its form." The king said, "Change into something big, then."

That 8 Rules happened to know thirty-six kinds of transformation. He stood before the steps and showed off his ability; making the magic sign with his fingers and reciting a spell, he shouted, "Grow!" He straightened his torso and at once attained the height of eighty or ninety feet just like a pathfinding deity. The two rows of civil and military officials shook in their boots; the ruler and the subjects of the entire kingdom were terror-stricken. One of the palace guardian-generals managed to ask, "Elder, when will you stop growing? Is there a limit to your height?" Idiot could not refrain from spouting idiotic words. "It depends on the wind," he said. "It's all right if the east wind is blowing, and the west wind is okay, too. But if the south wind rises, I'll bore a great hole in the blue sky!" Horrified, the king said, "Retrieve your magic. I know your power of transformation." Squatting down, 8 Rules changed back into his original form at once and stood before the steps. "Elder," asked the king once more, "what sort of weapons do you intend to bring with you to do battle on this expedition?" 8 Rules took out his muckrake and said, "What Old bull uses is a pronged rake."

"That's shameful!" said the king with a chuckle. "We've here whips, maces, gilt bludgeons, mallets, scimitars, spears, halberds with crescent-shaped blades, battle-axes, swords, halberds, lances, and battle sickles. You can pick anything you like and take it with you. How could you regard that rake of yours as a weapon?"

"You've no idea about this, Your Majesty," said 8 Rules. "This rake may seem a rather crude instrument but it is one that has stayed with me since my youth. When I was commanding some eighty thousand sailors in the naval department at the Heavenly River, I relied solely on the strength of this rake. Now that I've descended to this mortal world to accompany my master that which *ploughs through the mountain dens of tigers and wolves and overturns the water homes of dragons and snakes* is all the work of this rake!"

Most delighted and reassured by what he heard, the king turned to some of his ladies in the court, saying, "Bring me my own special juice. Take the whole bottle in fact so that we can send the elder off properly." He then poured a goblet of it and presented it to 8 Rules, saying, "Elder, this cup of juice is for the labour you're about to undertake. Wait till you capture the monster and bring back our little girl. We'll have a huge banquet and a thousand pieces of gold to thank you." Idiot took hold of the cup in his hands; though he was a rude and rowdy person, he could act courteously when he wanted to. Saluting deeply to Tripitaka, he said, "Master, you'd be the first one to drink this juice. But since it is the king who bestows it on me, I dare not refuse. Please permit Old bull to drink this juice first. It should help inspire me to catch the monster." Idiot drained the goblet with one gulp before filling it again to hand it to his master. Tripitaka said, "I don't drink. You brothers may take it." Sand-monk went forward to receive the cup while the clouds sprouted beneath 8 Rules' feet and lifted him straight into the air. When the king saw this, he said, "So Elder Bullseye knows even cloud soaring!" Idiot left, and after draining the goblet also with one gulp, Sand-monk said, "Master, when that Yellow Robe Fiend caught you, two of us could only battle him to a draw. If Second Brother goes by himself now, I fear that he may be unable to withstand him."

"You're right, disciple," said Tripitaka. "You may go to lend him some assistance." Hearing this, Sand-monk leaped up and left soaring on the clouds. The king became alarmed and caught hold of the Tang Monk, saying, "Elder, please sit with us for a while. Don't you go away too, soaring on the clouds." The Tang Monk said, "Pity! Pity! I can't even move half a step like that!"

At this time, the 2 of them chatted in the palace. Sand-monk caught up with 8 Rules, saying, "Elder Brother, I'm here." 8 Rules said, "Brother, why did you come?"

"Master told me to come help you," said Sand-monk.

Highly pleased, 8 Rules said, "Well said and welcome! United in our minds and efforts, the two of us can go catch that monster. It may not be much but we'll spread our fame a little in this kingdom."

Look at them: *swathed in hallowed light they passed the kingdom's edge; borne by auspicious air they left the capital. They went by the king's decree to the mountain cave to catch with all diligence the monster-spirit*. In a little while, the two of them arrived at the mouth of the cave and lowered the direction of their clouds. Raising his rake, 8 Rules delivered a blow on the door of the Current-Moon Cave with all his might: at once a hole about the size of a barrel appeared in the stone door. The little fiends standing guard at the entrance were so startled that they opened the door immediately and found that it was the two monks. They ran inside to report, crying, "Great King, it's terrible! The monk with a long horn and huge ears and the monk with the gloomiest complexion have returned and busted our door."

Surprised, the monster said, "These two have to be Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk. I spared their master already. How dare they come back and wreck my door!"

A little fiend said, "They must've left behind something and returned to get it."

"Rubbish!" cried the old fiend. "You leave something behind and then you go and break down someone's door? There has to be another reason." He quickly put on his armour, grasped his scimitar, and walked outside. "Monks," he asked, "I've already spared your master. For what reason do you dare come back and break down my door?"

8 Rules said, "You lawless monster, you've really done something all right!"

"What?" asked the old demon.

"You abducted the third princess of the Precious Image Kingdom to this cave and forced her to be your wife," said 8 Rules. "It's been thirteen years, about time that you give her up. I've been decreed by the king specially to capture you. Go inside quickly and come out again after tying yourself up. That'll save Old bull from having to raise his hands."

When that old monster heard these words, he grew enraged. *Look at him! Noisily, he ground his teeth; round and round, his eyes glowered; in fury, he lifted his scimitar; with bloody thought, he slashed at the head*. 8 Rules stepped aside to dodge the blow and returned one with his pronged rake. Immediately, Sand-monk wielded his precious staff and rushed forward to join the battle. This conflict waged on the peak was different from the one before. Truly, *wrong words and irksome speech arouse one's wrath; malice and rancour make one's anger grow. The scimitar of this big demon king slashes at the head; the 9-pronged rake of that 8 Rules confronts him at the face. Sand Awakened to Purity unleashes the precious staff; the demon king parries this weapon divine. 1 savage fiend and 2 godlike monks move back and forth, taking their time to fight! This one says, "You defraud a nation and are worthy of death!"*



*That one says, “You’re wrongly indignant at someone’s affairs!”*  
*This one says, “You raped a princess and brought her country shame!”*  
*That one says, “It’s none of your business, so stop meddling!”*

*It is all because of a letter sent that both monks and demon are not at peace.* They battled for eight or nine rounds before the mountain, and 8 Rules began to weaken steadily; he could hardly lift his rake and he was rapidly losing his strength. He could not prevail against the monster because when they fought previously there were the religion-protecting deities who gave the disciples secret assistance because of the Tang Monk’s presence in the cave. That was why they fought to a draw. At this time however, all the gods had gone to the Precious Image Kingdom to guard the Tang Monk, and the two disciples by themselves could not withstand their adversary. Idiot said, “Sand-monk, you come up and fight with him for a while. Let Old bull go shit first!” Not showing the slightest care for Sand-monk, he dove right into a thicket of bramble bushes; without regard for good or ill with no concern that the thorns were pricking his face and tearing up his scalp, he rolled right inside and lay down, refusing to come out at all. Only half of his ear was left outside, so that he could hear the rattle<sup>10</sup> and learn how the battle was faring. When the monster saw that 8 Rules had run away, he went after Sand-monk. Completely flustered, Sand-monk did not even have time to try to escape, and he was seized by the monster and hauled back to the cave where he was bound hand and foot behind his back by the little fiends.

030

**A deviant demon attacks the true Religion; the Horse of the Will recalls Mind Monkey**

The fiend who having had Sand-monk firmly bound, did not proceed to kill him or beat him. He did not in fact utter so much as an abusive word to his prisoner. Holding on to his scimitar, he thought to himself instead, “The Tang Monk is a man from a noble nation who must know the meaning of propriety and righteousness. How could he possibly send his disciples to try to seize me, when it was I who spared his life in the first place? Aha! It has to be some sort of letter sent by that wife of mine back to her kingdom, and that’s how the news is leaked! Let me go ask her.” Turning savage all of a sudden, the monster wanted to kill the princess.

The princess, alas, was still in the dark about the whole matter. After putting on her makeup, she was walking along when she saw the fiend approaching with bulging eyes and knitted brows, fiercely grinding his teeth together. Smiling broadly, she said to him, “Husband, what’s bothering you so terribly?” “You filthy bitch!” cried the fiend. “You’ve no regard for human relations! When I first brought you here, you didn’t utter half a word of protest. You had silk to wear and gold to put on; whatever you needed I went out to procure. You’ve been enjoying the goods of all four seasons and my deep affection every day. Why do you still think only of your parents with no care at all for our marriage?” When the princess heard what he said, she was so terror-stricken that she knelt on the ground at once. “Husband,” she said, “why are you speaking such words of separation today?” “I don’t know whether it’s you or I who wants separation!” said the fiend. “I caught the Tang Monk and wanted very much to enjoy him. Why did you promise him release before you even consulted me? The fact of the matter had to be that you wrote a letter in secret and asked him to deliver it for you. If it weren’t so, why did those two monks come fighting back to my door and demand your return? Didn’t you do all this?”

“Husband, you wrong me,” said the princess. “Since when did I send any letter?” “Still trying to deny it, huh?” said the fiend. “I’ve caught someone here who’s going to be a witness.” “Who’s he?” asked the princess. The old fiend said, “Sand-monk, the second disciple<sup>1</sup> of the Tang Monk.”

Now, no human person is likely to accept death willingly even if death is near. Determined to deny everything, the princess said, “Husband, calm yourself and let us go question him. If there were a letter, I’d gladly let you beat me to death. But if there were no such letter, wouldn’t you’ve slain me unjustly?” When the fiend heard these words, he did not wait for further discussion. Stretching forth his indigo hand that had the size and shape of a winnow, he grabbed the princess by those ten thousand locks of long, lovely hair and pulled her all the way to the front. He threw her to the ground and then went forward, scimitar in hand, to question the prisoner. “Sand-monk,” he bellowed, “since the two of you dared fight up to our door, I ask you this: was it because this girl had sent a letter back to her country that the king told you to come?”

When the shackled Sand-monk saw how furious the monster was, hurling the princess to the ground and threatening to kill her with the scimitar, he thought to himself, “Of course she sent a letter. But she also saved my master, and that was an incomparably great favour. If I admitted it freely, he would kill the princess on the spot and that would have meant our repaying kindness with enmity. All right! All right! Old Sand, after all, has followed Master all this time and I’ve not made the merest of merit. Today, I’m already a bound captive here; I might as well offer my life to repay my master’s kindness.” He then shouted, “Monster, don’t you dare be unruly! What kind of letter did she send that made you want to accuse her and take her life? There was another reason for us to come to demand from you the princess. Because you had imprisoned my master in the cave, he had the chance to catch a glimpse of the princess, her looks and her gestures. By the time we reached the Precious Image Kingdom and had our travel rescript certified, the king was making all kinds of inquiry about the whereabouts of his daughter with a painted portrait of hers. He showed my master that portrait and asked us whether we’d seen her on the way. When my master described the lady he saw at this place, the king knew it was his daughter. He bestowed on us his own imperial juice and commanded us to come here to take you captive and bring his princess back to the palace. This is the truth. Since when was there a letter? If you want to kill someone, you can kill old Sand! But don’t harm an innocent bystander and add to your sins!”

When the fiend heard how heroically Sand-monk had spoken, he threw away his scimitar and lifted the princess up with both his hands, saying, “I was quite rough with you just now, and I must have offended you deeply. Please forgive me!” He helped her straighten her hair again and reset the bejewelled ornaments with great tenderness and amiability, hugging her and teasing her as they walked inside. He then asked her to take a seat in the middle of the chamber and apologised again. The princess, after all, was a rather fickle woman; when she saw how penitent he became, she, too, had a change of heart. “Husband,” she said, “if you’ve regard for our love, please loosen those ropes on Sand-monk a little.” When the old fiend heard that, he ordered the little ones to untie Sand-monk and lock him up instead. After he was freed and locked up, Sand-monk stood up, secretly pleased and thinking to himself, “The ancients said, ‘Kindness to others is really kindness to oneself.’ If I were not kind to her, she wouldn’t make him untie me, would she?”

The old fiend, meanwhile, asked also for juice and food to be served as a means of making further amends to the princess and calming her fears. After drinking until they were half tipsy, the old fiend suddenly changed into a brightly coloured robe and girded a sword on his waist. “Mistress,” he said, caressing the princess with his hand, “you stay home and drink some more. Look after our two kids and don’t let Sand-monk get away. While the Tang Monk is still in the kingdom, I’m going there to get acquainted with my kin.”

“To get acquainted with what kin?” asked the princess. “Your Dad King,” said the old fiend. “I’m his imperial son-in-law and he’s my dad-in-law. Why shouldn’t I go and get acquainted?” The princess said, “You can’t go.”

“Why not?” said the old fiend. The princess said, “My Dad King didn’t win his empire by might on horseback; he inherited it from his ancestors. Since he ascended his throne in his youth, he hasn’t even left the gate of the city. We’ve no violent men with looks as savage and gruesome as yours. If you meet him, you might scare him and that wouldn’t be a good thing. It’s better that you not go to get acquainted.”

“If you put it like that,” said the old fiend, “let me change into a handsome fellow and go there.” “Change and let me look at you first,” said the princess.

Dear monster! Right before the dining table, he shook his body once and changed into a very comely person. Truly he had *most elegant features and a rugged physique. He spoke like a mandarin and moved with the grace of youth. Gifted as Zijian<sup>2</sup> he could rhyme with ease; he looked like Pan An<sup>3</sup> when they tossed him fruits. He put on his head a crow-tail cap, his hair gathered in smoothly; and wore on his body a lined, white silk robe with wide, billowy sleeves. Beneath his feet were patterned black boots; around his waist shone the 5-coloured belt. He had the true bearing of a striking man: handsome, tall, dignified, and full of strength.* The princess was most pleased by what she saw. “Mistress,” said that fiend laughing, “Is it a good transformation?” “Marvellous! Marvellous!” said the princess. “Just remember this: once you enter the court, many officials, both civil and military, will no doubt invite you to banquets, since it’s my Dad King’s policy never to reject any relatives. You must be extra careful when you drink not to reveal your original appearance. For once you show yourself in your true form, you don’t look that civilised.”

“No need for all that instruction,” said the old fiend. “I know what to do.”

Look at him. He mounted the clouds and soon arrived at the Precious Image Kingdom. Lowering their direction, he went before the court and said to the guardian of the gate, “The third imperial son-in-law came especially to seek an audience with the Throne. Please report this for me.” The Custodian of the Yellow Gate went before the white jade steps and made the report, saying, “Your Majesty, the third imperial son-in-law has come to seek an audience with the Throne. He is outside the gate of the court and awaits your summons.” The king was just conversing with the Tang Monk; when he heard of the third imperial son-in-law, he asked his ministers, “We’ve only two sons-in-law. How is it that there is a third?”

“The third imperial son-in-law,” said several of the ministers, “must be that monster.”

“Shall we summon him in?” asked the king.

Already apprehensive, the elder said, “Your Majesty, it’s a monster-spirit! If he’s not a spirit, he will not be intelligent. He must know the future and the past, for he is able to mount the clouds and ride the mists. He’ll come when you summon him but even if you didn’t, he would come in anyway. You might as well summon him in so that we might be spared any kind of hassle.”

The king gave his consent and ordered the fiend be summoned before the golden steps. He, too, went through an elaborate performance of court ritual to pay homage to the king. When all the officials saw how handsome he was, they dared not consider him a monster-spirit; being of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, they regarded him as a good man instead. When the king saw how lofty and dignified he appeared, he also thought that this was a man of distinguished abilities, fit to govern the world. “Son-in-law,” he said, “where is your home? What region are you from? When did you marry our princess? Why did you wait until today before coming to be recognised as our kin?”

“My lord,” said the old fiend, respecting, “your subject comes from a household east of this city, in the Current-Moon Cave of the Casserole Mountain.” The king asked, “How far is your mountain from our place?”

“Not far,” replied the old fiend, “only about three hundred miles.”

“Three hundred miles,” said the king. “How could our princess possibly get there to marry you?”

With clever words and the intent to deceive, the monster-spirit replied, “My lord, your subject has been fond of archery and riding since his youth, for I earn my livelihood by hunting. Thirteen years ago, I led scores of houseboys up to the mountain, and we’re just sending out our hawks and hounds when we saw a large, striped tiger. It was going down the slope of the mountain carrying a young girl. It was your subject who shot the tiger with a single arrow and brought the girl back to our village where she was revived with some warm liquids. When I questioned her about her home after saving her life, she never mentioned the word ‘princess.’ Had she declared that she was the third princess of your Majesty, would I dare be so insolent as to marry her without your consent? I’d have tried to enter the golden palace and seek some kind of appointment however lowly, in order to be worthy of her. Because she claimed however, that she was a girl from some peasant household, your subject asked her to remain in my village. We seemed to be ideally suited for each other, and we’re both willing; that’s why we’ve been married for these thirteen years. After our wedding, I was about to slaughter the tiger and use it to fete the relatives. The princess however, requested me not to do so, and she put her reason aptly in these poetic lines:

*Heaven and Earth made us spouses; with no broker or witness we’re wed.*  
*Red threads<sup>4</sup> did bind our feet in previous lives: that’s why the tiger’s our go-between.*

Because of what she said, your subject untied the tiger and spared its life. Claws flailing and tail wagging, it ran away still carrying the arrow wound. Little did I anticipate that after a few years, the tiger thus spared managed to become a spirit in the mountain through self-cultivation, bent on seducing and hurting people. Some years ago, your subject had heard of several scripture pilgrims, all priests sent by the Great Tang. The tiger, I think, must have taken their lives; he probably got hold of the travel documents and changed into one of their forms to come here to deceive my lord. My lord, the person sitting on that brocaded cushion over there is none other than the tiger which carried away the princess thirteen years ago. He is not a real scripture pilgrim.”

Look at that capricious ruler! His foolish, undiscerning eyes of the flesh could not recognise the monster-spirit; instead, he regarded that entire specious speech to be the truth. “Worthy son-in-law,” he said, “how could you tell that this monk is a tiger, the one which carried away our princess?”

“My lord,” said the fiend, “what your subject feeds on in the mountain are tigers; what he wears are also tigers. I sleep with them and rise with them. How could I not recognise them?”

“In that case,” said the king, “make him appear in his true form.”

The fiendish creature said, “Please give me half a cup of clean water and your subject will make him appear in his true form.”

The king ordered an official to fetch the water for the imperial son-in-law. Taking the cup in his hand, the fiend got up and went forward to exercise the Dim-Eyes, Still-Body Magic. He recited a spell and spat a mouthful of water on the Tang Monk crying, “Change!”

The true body of the elder at once became invisible; what everyone saw in the palace was a ferocious striped tiger instead. In those worldly eyes of the king and his subjects, the tiger truly had a *white brow and a round head, a striped body and lightning eyes. Its four huge paws were straight and rugged; its 20 claws were hook-like and sharp. Saw-like teeth filled its mouth; pointed ears joined its*

eyebrows. *Savage, it bore the form of a big cat; raging, it had the shape of a brown steer. Steel hairs stood rigidly like silver strips; a red tongue, dagger-like, belched nasty air. It was indeed a striped, ferocious thing, blasting the palace with its awesome breaths.* When the king saw it, his soul melted and his spirit fled while many of his subjects were frightened into hiding. A few courageous military officials led the captains and guards to rush forward and began hacking away with their weapons. If it had not been for the fact that the Tang Monk this time was not yet fated to die, even 20 monks would have been reduced to minced meat. Fortunately he had at this time the secret protection of Light and Darkness, the Guardians, the Sentinels, and the Protectors of the Faith in the air. For that reason, the weapons of those people could not harm him. The chaos in the palace lasted until evening, when the officials decided to capture the tiger alive and lock it up with chains before placing it in an iron cage. It was then stored in one of the palace chambers. The king then gave the decree that the Court of Imperial Entertainments prepare a huge banquet to thank the imperial son-in-law for saving him from the monk. The demon entered that evening into the Silver Peace Hall after the officials retired from court where 18 young palace ladies attended him; they recited poems, exercised, and poured his juice for him. Sitting all by himself at the head table, he had on both sides of him all those lovely beauties. Look at him drink and enjoy! By about the hour of the 2<sup>nd</sup> watch, he got drunk and could no longer refrain from mischief. Leaping up all of a sudden, he laughed hysterically for a moment and changed back into his original form. He grew violent then and grabbed 1 of the girls playing the *pipa*² with that big winnow-like hand of his. With a crunch, he bit off her head. The other seventeen palace girls were so terrified that they dashed madly for hiding and shelter. Look at them: *the palace ladies panicked; the maids-of-honour took fright – the palace ladies panicked like rain-struck hibiscus bearing the night rain. The maids-of-honour took fright like wind-blown Peonia dancing in the spring wind. They smashed their Pipas, eager to live; they broke their zithers, fleeing for life. They dashed out the doors, not knowing north or south! They quit the main hall, flying both east and west! They scraped their jade-like features; they bruised their lovely faces. Everyone scrambled for her life; each person darted for safety.* Those people ran out but they dared not even scream or holler for fear of disturbing the Throne so late at night. Quaking and shaking, they sought to hide beneath the eaves of the low palace wall. The fiendish creature sat in the hall, pouring juice and drinking all by himself. After draining a glass, he would haul the bloody corpse near him and take a couple of bites. As he was thus enjoying himself inside, the people outside the palace began to spread a wild rumour that the Tang Monk was a monster-spirit. All the hubbub soon reached the Golden Lodge posthouse. At that time, there was no one at the posthouse except the white horse that was consuming hay and feed in the stall. He was originally the dragon prince of the Western Ocean, you recall but because of past offence against Heaven, his horns were sawed off and his scales were shorn. He was changed into the white horse so that he could carry the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures in the West. When he suddenly heard people saying that the Tang Monk was a tiger spirit, he thought to himself, “My master’s definitely a true man. It’d be that fiend who changed him into a tiger spirit in order to harm him. What’s to be done? What’s to be done? Big Brother’s long gone and there’s no news from either Sand-monk or Eight Rules.” He waited until it was about the second watch, and then he said to himself, “If I don’t try to rescue the Tang Monk now, this merit will be undone. Finished!” No longer able to contain himself, he bit through the reins and shook off the saddle; all at once he changed himself once more into a dragon and mounted the dark clouds to rise into the air. A testimonial poem for him says:

*The priest goes West to seek the World-Honoured 1 though foul and fiendish vapours clog the way.  
Tonight he’s a tiger, what hopeless ordeal! The white horse drops reins his master to save.*

In mid-air the young dragon prince saw that the Silver Peace Hall was aglow with lights, for there were eight huge candelabra standing inside with all their candles lit. As he lowered the direction of his clouds, he looked carefully and saw the monster seated alone at the head table and gorging himself with juice and human flesh. “What a worthless fellow!” said the dragon with a laugh. “He’s shown his hand! He’s revealed himself! It’s not very smart to eat people, is it! Since I don’t know the whereabouts of Master and I’ve only this lawless demon before me, I might as well go down there and have some fun with him. If I succeed, I might be able to catch the monster-spirit first and then rescue my master.”

Dear dragon prince! With one shake of his body, he changed himself into a palace maid, truly slender of body and seductive in appearance. She walked swiftly inside and saluted to the demon, saying, “Imperial son-in-law, please don’t hurt me. I came to pour juice for you.”

“Pour then,” said the fiend. Taking up the juice pot, the little dragon began pouring until the juice was about half an inch higher than the rim of the goblet but the juice did not spill. This was in fact the Magic of Water Restriction used by the little dragon, though the fiend did not know it even when he saw it. “What uncanny ability you’ve,” he said, highly pleased. The little dragon said, “I can pour and make it go even higher.”

“Pour some more! Pour some more!” cried the fiend. The little dragon took the pot and kept on pouring, until the juice rose like a pagoda of thirteen layers with a pointed top; not a drop of it was spilled. The fiendish creature stuck out his mouth and finished a whole goblet before he picked up the carcass and took another bite. Then he said, “You know how to recite?”

“A little,” said the little dragon who selected a verses and recited it before presenting another goblet of juice to the fiend.

“You know how to exercise?” said the monster.

The little dragon said, “A little also but I’m empty-handed, and the exercise won’t be attractive.”

Lifting up his robe, the fiend unbuckled the sword he wore on his waist and pulled the blade out of the sheath. The little dragon took the sword from him and began to exercise in front of the dining table; wielding the sword up and down, left and right, she created intricate patterns of movement. Waiting until the fiend was completely dazzled by the exercise, the little dragon suddenly broke the steps and slashed him with the sword. Dear monster! He lunged sideways and the blow barely missed him; the next thrust of the dragon was met by a candelabrum made of wrought iron and weighing about eighty or ninety pounds that the monster picked up in a hurry. The two of them left the Silver Peace Palace as the little dragon changed back to his original form to do battle with the fiend in mid-air. This battle in the darkness was something! *It was this 1 was a monster born and formed on Casserole Mount; that 1 was a chastised true dragon of the Western Ocean. This 1 gave off bright light like white lightning; that 1 belched out potent air like bursting red cloud. This 1 seemed a white-tusked elephant let loose among mankind; that 1 seemed a golden-clawed wild cat flown down to earth. This 1 was a jade pillar propping up Heaven; that 1 was a golden beam bridging the seas. The silver dragon flew and exercised; the yellow demon flipped and flopped. The precious sword, left and right, did not slow down; the candelabrum went on and on back and forth.* After the 2 of them had fought at the edge of the clouds for about eight or nine rounds, the little dragon’s hand grew weak and his limbs turned numb. The old demon after all was strong and powerful when the little dragon found that he could no longer withstand his adversary, he aimed the sword at the monster and threw it at him. The monster however, was not unprepared for this desperate move; with one hand, he caught the blade, and with the other, he hurled the candelabrum at the little dragon. Unnerved, the dragon did not duck fast enough and one of his hind legs was struck by it. Hastily he dropped down from the clouds, and it was his luck that the imperial moat was there to save his life. Chased by the demon, the little dragon dove headfirst into the water and all at once became invisible. Whereupon the demon took the sword and picked up the candelabrum to go back to the Silver Peace Palace; there he drank as before till he fell asleep. The little dragon hid himself at the bottom of the moat. When he did not hear a sound after half an hour, he gritted his teeth to endure the pain in his leg and leaped up. Treading the dark clouds, he returned to the posthouse where he changed once more into a horse and lay down in the stall. He looked pitiful indeed – completely soaked and wounded on his leg! At this time, *horse of the Will and Ape of the Mind are all dispersed; Metal Squire and Wood Mum are both scattered; Yellow Dame is wounded from everyone divorced; with reason and right so parted, what can be achieved?* Tripitaka met disaster and the little dragon encountered defeat. Bullseye 8 Rules since abandoning Sand-monk, stuck his head deep into the bushes and lay there like a bull snoozing in a pool of mud. The nap in fact lasted till the middle of the night, and only at that time did he awake. When he became conscious, he did not even know where he was at first; only after he rubbed his eyes and collected his thoughts a little did he manage to cock his ears to listen to whatever might be happening. Well, what happened was that *this deep mountain had no dog barking; these spacious wilds lacked even cock crowing.* Looking up at the stars, he figured that it was about the hour of the third watch and he thought to himself, “I’d like to try to rescue Sand-monk but *1 silk fibre is no thread; a single hand can’t clap!*” Ok! Ok! Let me go back and see Master first. If I’d persuade the king to give me some more help, Old bull would return to rescue Sand-monk tomorrow.”

Idiot mounted the clouds quickly and went back to the city; in a little while, he reached the posthouse. The moon was bright and people had become quiet at this time but he searched the corridors in vain to find any trace of his master. All he saw was the white horse lying there: his whole body was soaked and on one of his hind legs was the mark of a bruise about the size of a pan. “This is doubly unfortunate!” said 8 Rules, greatly startled. “This loser hasn’t travelled. Why is he sweating like that, and with a bruise on his leg? It must be that some evil men have robbed our master, wounding the horse in the process.”

The white horse recognised that it was 8 Rules; assuming human speech suddenly, he called out: “Elder Brother!” Idiot was so shaken that he fell on the ground. Pulling himself up, he was about to dash outside when the white horse caught hold of the monk’s robe by his teeth, saying again, “Elder Brother, don’t be afraid of me.”

“Brother,” said 8 Rules, still shaking, “why are you talking today? When you talk like that, it has to mean that some great misfortune is about to befall us.”

The little dragon said, “Did you know that Master had landed in a terrible ordeal?”

“No, I didn’t,” said 8 Rules.

The little dragon said, “Of course, you didn’t! You and Sand-monk were flaunting your abilities before the king, thinking that you’d capture the demon and be rewarded for your merit. You didn’t expect that the demon was so powerful and you’re the ones no doubt who were beaten. At least one of you’d have returned to give us the news but there was not one word from either of you. That monster-spirit had changed himself into a handsome scholar and broken into the court to present himself to the king as an imperial relative. Our master was changed by him into a ferocious striped tiger who was then taken captive by the officials and locked up in an iron cage in one of the palace chambers. When I heard how Master suffered, my heart felt as if it had been stabbed by a sword. But you’re gone for nearly two days, and I was afraid that any further delay might mean that Master would be killed. So I’d no choice but to change back into my dragon body to go and try to rescue him. When I reached the court, I’d not find Master but I met the monster in the Silver Peace Palace. I changed into the form of a palace maid, trying to deceive him. He asked me to do a sword exercise, during which I tried to slash him. He escaped my blow and defeated me instead with a candelabrum. I tried desperately to hit him when I threw the sword at him but he caught it instead and gave me a blow on my hind leg with that candelabrum. I dived into the imperial moat and saved my life; the bruise on my leg was caused by the candelabrum.”

When 8 Rules heard these words, he said, “Is that all true?”

“You think I’m deceiving you?” said the little dragon. 8 Rules asked, “What are we going to do? What are we going to do? Can you move at all?”

“If I can,” said the little dragon, “what then?”

“If you can move at all,” said 8 Rules, “move into the ocean then. Old bull will pole the luggage back to the Old Gao Village to pick up my wife again.” When the little dragon heard this, he clamped his mouth onto 8 Rules’ shirt and refused to let go. As tears fell from his eyes, he said, “Elder Brother, you mustn’t become indolent.”

“Why not?” said 8 Rules. “Brother Sand has already been caught by him, and I can’t beat him. If we don’t scatter now, what are we waiting for?” The little dragon thought for some time before he spoke again, tears streaming down his cheeks. “Elder Brother, don’t mention the word scatter. If you want to save Master, you’ve to go and ask a person to come here.”

“Who is that?” asked 8 Rules. The little dragon said, “You’d better hurry and mount the clouds to go to the Flower-Fruit Mountain, so that you can invite our Big Brother, Pilgrim Sun, to come back. Most certainly he has religion power great enough to subdue this fiend and rescue Master, avenging at the same time the shame of our defeat.”

“Brother,” said 8 Rules, “let me go ask someone else. That monkey and I are not on the best of terms, you know. When he killed that Lady White Bone back there on the White Tiger Ridge, he was mad at me already for wheedling Master into reciting the Tight-Fillet Spell. I was just being frivolous, and I didn’t think that the old priest would really recite it and even banish him. I don’t know how he hates me now, and I’m certain also that he’ll not come back. Suppose we’ve a little argument then: that funeral staff of his is pretty heavy, you know. If he doesn’t know any better at that moment and gives me a few strokes, you think I’ll be able to live?” The little dragon said, “He’ll not hit you, because he is a kind and just Monkey King. When you see him, don’t say that Master is in peril; just tell him that Master is thinking of him and deceive him into coming. When he gets here and sees what’s happening, he will not get mad. He will want most certainly to have it out with the monster-spirit instead. Then the demon will surely be caught and Master will be saved.”

“All right, all right!” said 8 Rules. “You’re so dedicated. If I don’t go, it’ll mean that I’m not dedicated. I’ll go, and if indeed Pilgrim consents to come, I’ll return with him. But if he is unwilling, then don’t expect me because I’ll not be coming back either.”

“Go! Go!” said the little dragon. “He will certainly come.”

Idiot indeed put away his muckrake and straightened his shirt. He leaped up and mounted the clouds, heading straight toward the East. It so happened that the Tang Monk was not yet fated to die. The wind was blowing in the right direction; all Idiot had to do was to stick up his huge ears, and he sped across the Eastern Ocean as if sails were hoisted on him. The sun was just rising when he dropped from the clouds to find his way in the mountain. As he was walking, he heard someone talking. He took another careful look and found Pilgrim sitting on a huge boulder in a mountain valley. Before him some one thousand and two hundred monkeys lined up in ranks, all shouting, “Long live our Dad Great Sage!” 8 Rules said, “What pleasures! What pleasures! No wonder he doesn’t want to be a monk and wants only to come home! Look at all these goodies! Such a huge household, and so many little monkeys to serve him! If Old bull has a large farm like this, I’m not going to be a monk either. Since I’ve arrived, what shall I do? I suppose I’ll have to see him.”

But Idiot was in truth afraid of Pilgrim, and he dared not show himself openly. Sliding down the grassy meadow, he crawled stealthily into the midst of those thousand-odd monkeys and began to respect also along with them. He had no idea how high the Great Sage was sitting and how sharp his vision was. Having seen everything all at once, the Monkey King asked, “Who is that barbarian in the ranks who’s saluting in such a confused manner? Where does he come from? Bring him up here!” Hardly had he finished speaking when the little monkeys, like a swarm of bees, pushed 8 Rules to the front and pressed him to the ground. Pilgrim said, “Barbarian where did you come from?”

“I dare not accept the honour of your questioning me,” said 8 Rules, his head lowered. “I’m no barbarian, I’m an acquaintance.”

Pilgrim said, “All the monkeys under the command of the Great Sage here have similar features, not like that lubberly face of yours. You must be some fiendish demon from another region. If so, and if you want to be a subject of mine, you’d have first presented us with your name and the particulars of your age and antecedents on a card so that I can take your roll when you’re assigned to our ranks here. But you’ve not even done that, and you dare raise your hand here to salute me?”

With his head and horn lowered, 8 Rules said, “Oh, for shame! I’ll show you my face! I’ve been a brother of yours now for a few years and you still claim that you don’t recognise me, calling me some kind of barbarian!”

“Raise your head and let me have a look,” said Pilgrim with a chuckle. Sticking his horn upward, Idiot said, “Look! Even if you can’t recognise me, you can at least recognise this horn of mine!” Pilgrim could not refrain from laughing and saying, “Bullseye Eight Rules.” As soon as he heard this, he jumped up, crying, “Yes! Yes! I’m Bullseye 8 Rules.” He thought to himself also, “If he recognises me, then it’s easier to speak.”

Pilgrim said, “Why aren’t you accompanying the Tang Monk to go fetch scriptures? Why are you here? Could it be that you, too, have offended Master and he banished you also? Do you’ve any letter of banishment? Let me see it.”

“I didn’t offend him,” said 8 Rules, “and he didn’t give me any letter of banishment. Nor did he dismiss me.”

“If there’s no letter and he didn’t dismiss you, why are you here?” asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules replied, “Master has been thinking of you; he told me to come and invite you to go back.”

“He didn’t think of me, nor did he invite me,” said Pilgrim. “He swore to Heaven that day and he wrote the letter of banishment himself. How could he think of me and ask me to go back? I definitely will not go back.” 8 Rules lied conveniently, saying, “He really did think of you! He really did think of you!”

“What made him think of me?” asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, “As Master was riding on the horse, he called out at one point, ‘Disciple.’ I didn’t hear him, and Sand-monk claimed that he was somewhat deaf! Master at once thought of you, saying that we’re worthless and that only you’re smart and alert enough to answer once you’re called, to give ten replies to one question. That’s how he thought of you, and he has sent me specially to ask you to go back. Please do so, at least for the sake of his expectation and for the sake of my having travelled all this distance.”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he jumped down from the boulder. Taking the hand of 8 Rules, he said, “Worthy Brother, sorry that you’ve to travel such a great distance to come. Let’s you and I go and have some fun.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “this place is quite far away, and I fear that Master might be kept waiting. I don’t want to play.”

Pilgrim said, “After all, this is your first time here. Take a look at least at my mountain scenery.”

Idiot dared not persist in his refusal and had to walk away with him. The 2 of them proceeded hand in hand while the little monsters followed behind to go up to the highest spot on the Flower-Fruit Mountain. Marvellous Mountain! Ever since the Great Sage’s homecoming, it had been completely made new by his labour these few days. See the mountain green as carved jade, tall like a cloud-scraper. All around are tigers crouched and dragons coiled; on 4 sides are frequent calls of apes and cranes. At dawn the clouds blockade the summit; at dusk the sun is poised above the forest. The flowing stream murmurs like tinkling girdle-jade; the brook sounds drop by drop a psalterly note. Before the mountain are ridges and tall cliffs; behind the mountain are flowers and dense woods. It touches the jade-girl’s hair-washing bowl above; joins a branch of Heaven’s River down below. This cosmos-formed beauty surpasses Penglai, a true cave-mansion born of primal breaths. Even master artists find it hard to sketch, nor can wise mortals depict it all. Like open-works carved finely fantastic rocks in fantastic colours soar up at the top. The sun moves in a thousand purple rays; auspicious air forms countless strands of red mist. A cave-heaven, a blessed place among mankind: a mountain full of fresh blossoms and fresh trees. Delighted by the endless splendour of the scenery, 8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, what a lovely place! Truly the number one mountain in the whole world!”

“Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “think you can pass the time here?”

“Look at the way Elder Brother talks!” chuckled 8 Rules. “This precious mountain is a cave-heaven, a land of blessing. How could you say ‘pass the time’?” The two of them chatted amiably for a long time before descending from the peak. They met on the way several little monkeys, all holding purple grapes, fragrant pears, bright golden loquats, and dark red strawberries. Kneeling by the road, they cried, “Dad Great Sage, please have some breakfast.”

“My Brother Bullseye,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “has a huge appetite, and he doesn’t take fruits for breakfast. Nonetheless, please don’t be offended by such trifles; use them as snacks and take a few.” 8 Rules said, “Though I’ve a huge appetite, I do as the natives do anywhere. Yes, by all means bring them up here. I’ll try a few for taste.”

The two of them ate the fruits, and the sun was fast rising high. Afraid that there might not be enough time to save the Tang Monk, Idiot tried to urge his companion to leave, saying, “Elder Brother, Master is waiting for us. Please hurry and go.”

“Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “I’m inviting you to have some fun with me at the Water-Curtain Cave.” 8 Rules at once declined, saying, “I appreciate your kind thoughts, Old Brother but Master has waited for a long time already. There’s really no need for us to enter the cave.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “I dare not detain you. I’ll say good-bye right here.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “aren’t you going with me?”

Pilgrim said, “Go where? This place of mine is neither governed by Heaven nor controlled by Earth. I’m completely free here. Why shouldn’t I enjoy this? Why should I become a monk again? I’ll not go. You’ve to go back by yourself. And please tell the Tang Monk that once he has dismissed me, don’t ever think of me again.” When Idiot heard these words, he dared not press any further, for he was afraid that Pilgrim’s temper might flare and he would then receive a couple of strokes from the rod. He had no alternative but to take leave meekly and find his way back.

When Pilgrim saw him leave, he ordered two agile little monkeys to follow him and to find out what he was going to say. Indeed, when that Idiot descended the mountain, he did not cover more than three or four miles before he turned around and pointed his finger at the direction of Pilgrim. “You ape,” he cried, “You don’t want to be a priest! You choose to be a monster instead. What an ape! I came here with good intentions to ask him to go back but he refused. All right! If you don’t want to go, you don’t have to!” He took a few steps and began his castigations again. The two little monkeys ran back to report, “Dad Great Sage, that Bullseye 8 Rules is rather sneaky! He’s ranting at you as he walks away.”

Pilgrim grew angry and shouted, “Seize him!” All the little monkeys rushed after 8 Rules and pushed him to the ground. Clutching at his mane and tugging at his ears, pulling his tail and grabbing his hair, they hauled him bodily back to the cave.

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**Bullseye 8 Rules provokes the Monkey King to chivalry; Pilgrim Sun with wisdom defeats the monster**

*Righteousness joined to fraternal feelings, the religion returning to its own nature: Docile Metal and Gentle Wood will bear right fruit.*

*Mind Monkey and Wood Mum fuse with elixir source – ‘both ascending to the world of ultimate bliss and arriving at the gate of undivided truth.’<sup>2</sup>*

*Threads are the main path of self-cultivation; God should unite with one’s own spirit.*

*Brothers, elder and younger make the kinship of the 3; forms of monsters and demons match the 5 Phases.*

*Exterminate the 6-fold Path and you’ll reach the Great Thunderclap.*

Idiot was caught by those monkeys; pulling and tugging at him, they ripped open his shirt as they hauled him away. Over and over again, he muttered to himself, “Finished! I’m finished! This time, I’m going to be beaten to death!” In no time at all, they reached the entrance of the cave where the Great Sage was sitting again on top of the boulder. “You overstuffed coolie!” he shouted. “You’d have just left. Why did you abuse me?” Kneeling on the ground, 8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, I didn’t abuse you. If I did, I’d bite off this tongue! I only said that if you didn’t want to go, I’d go back to tell Master and that would have been the end of it. How would I dare abuse you?”

“How could you possibly deceive me?” asked Pilgrim. “If I pull up this left ear of mine, I can find out who’s speaking up in the Thirty-third Heaven; if I pull down this right ear of mine, I can discover how the Ten Kings of Hell are settling the cases with the judges. You’re maligning me as you walked away, and you thought that I’d not hear you?”

8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, now I know. You’re something of a crook and a shakedown artist! You must have changed into some kind of creature and followed me. That’s how you found out.”

“Little ones,” cried Pilgrim, “select for me a large cane! Give him twenty strokes on his shanks as a greeting; then give him another twenty on his back. Thereafter let me use my iron rod to send him on his way!” 8 Rules was so terrified that he respected at once, saying, “Elder Brother, I beg you to spare me for the sake of Master.”

“O, Master is so just and kind!” said Pilgrim.

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules again, “if not for the sake of Master, at least for the sake of the Nun, please forgive me.”

When Pilgrim heard him mention the Nun, he relented somewhat, saying, “Brother, if you put it that way, I’ll not hit you for the moment. But you must be honest with me and not try to deceive me. Where is that Tang Monk facing an ordeal that has caused you to come and call for me?”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “there’s no ordeal. He is truly thinking of you.”

“Coolie, you must love to be beaten!” shouted Pilgrim. “Why are you still trying to dupe me? Though old monkey’s body has returned to the Water-Curtain Cave, his heart follows the scripture monk. Our master faces an ordeal with each step of the way; he is fated to suffer at every place. You better tell me quickly, or you’ll be whipped!”

When 8 Rules heard such words, he respected and said, “Elder Brother, I did quite clearly attempt to deceive you into going but I’d no idea how smart you’re. Please spare me from a beating and let me tell you standing up.”

“All right,” said Pilgrim, “rise and talk.” The monkeys took away their hands and Idiot, jumping up at once, began to look wildly left and right. Pilgrim said, “What are you doing that for?”

“To see which road is wide and smooth so that I can run,” said 8 Rules. “To where?” asked Pilgrim. “I’ll let you’ve a three days’ head start, and old monkey still has the ability to chase you back. You’d better speak up! If you get me mad again, I’ll not spare you this time.”

8 Rules said, “To tell you the truth, Elder Brother, since you left us, Sand-monk and I accompanied Master to go forward and we arrived at a black pine forest. Master dismounted and told me to go beg for vegetarian food. Because I didn’t find even a single household after walking a great distance, I got a bit tired and napped a little in the grass. Sand-monk, I didn’t realise, also left Master to try to find me. You know that Master couldn’t sit still, and he took a walk by himself in the forest to enjoy the scenery. When he got out of the forest, he saw a luminescent jewelled pagoda of yellow gold that he thought was some sort of monastery. He didn’t know that there was a monster-spirit beneath the pagoda who had the name of Yellow Robe, and he was caught by the fiend. Later, when Sand-monk and I returned to look for him, we saw only the white horse and the luggage but we didn’t see Master. We searched until we went to the door of the cave where we fought the fiend. Meanwhile, Master met a saving star inside who happened to be the third princess of the Precious Image Kingdom, abducted some time ago by that fiend. She wrote a letter to her family and wanted Master to send it for her; that was the reason why she persuaded the monster to let Master go. When we arrived at the kingdom, we presented the letter whereupon the king asked Master to subdue the monster. Elder Brother, you’d know. How could that old priest subdue any monster? It had to be the two of us again who went back to do battle but the magic power of the fiend was tremendous and he seized Sand-monk instead. I managed to escape by hiding in the grass. Thereafter, the monster changed himself into a handsome scholar to gain admittance into the court and imperial recognition. Master, on the other hand, was changed by him into a tiger. That evening, it was fortunate that the white dragon-horse revealed himself to go search for Master; he didn’t find him but he saw the fiend drinking in the Silver Peace Palace. Changing into a palace maid, the dragon poured juice for him, did a sword exercise, and was about to use that opportunity to try to kill the monster. He was wounded instead by him with a candelabrum, and it was the dragon who told me to come get you. He said that Elder Brother was a just and benevolent gentleman, one who would not dwell on old wrongs and would be willing to go and save Master. I beg you, Elder Brother, remember the truth of ‘Once a teacher, always a dad,’ and do try to save him.”

“You idiot!” said Pilgrim. “At the time of my leaving, I told you repeatedly that if Master were caught by a monstrous demon, you’d tell him that old monkey was his eldest disciple. Why didn’t you say so?” 8 Rules thought to himself, “To ask a warrior is not as effective as to provoke a warrior. Let me provoke him a bit.” He said therefore, “Elder Brother, it would have been better had I not mentioned you. Once I said something about you, the monster became even more impudent.”

“What do you mean?” asked Pilgrim.

8 Rules replied, “I said, ‘Monster, don’t you dare be insolent, and don’t you dare harm my master. I still have an elder brother who is called Pilgrim Sun. His magic power is great and he is especially capable of subduing monsters. When he gets here, he’ll make you die without picking a place for burial.’ When that fiend heard my words, he became more aroused, crying, ‘Who’s this Pilgrim Sun that I’d be afraid of him? If he shows up, I’ll skin him alive. I’ll pull out his tendons, I’ll debone him, and I’ll devour his heart. He might be thin, this monkey but I’ll still chop him to pieces and fry him in oil.’” When Pilgrim heard these words, he became so enraged that he jumped up and down, madly scratching his cheeks and pulling at his ears. “Who is this that dares abuse me thus?” he bellowed.

8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, calm yourself. It’s the Yellow Robe Fiend who is thus abusing you. I was just giving you a rehearsal of what he said.”

“Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “get up. I’ve to go. If that monster-spirit dared abuse me so, it would be impossible for me not to subdue him. I’ll go with you. When old monkey caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago, all the divine warriors of Heaven would bend their backs and salute him when they saw him. Every one of them addressed me as the Great Sage. This fiend is truly impudent. He dares abuse me behind my back! I’ll go, I’ll catch him, and I’ll smash him to pieces to avenge myself for being so insulted. When I’ve done that, I’ll come back.”

“Exactly, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules. “You go and catch the monster first, and when you’ve avenged yourself, you can then decide whether you want to come back or not.”

Leaping down at once from the boulder, the Great Sage dashed into the cave and took off his monster garment. Tucking in his silk shirt and tightly fastening his tiger-skin kilt, he walked right out of the door holding his iron rod. Startled, the various monkeys barred the way and asked, "Dad Great Sage where are you going? Isn't it better that you look after us and have fun with us for a few more years?" Pilgrim said, "Little ones, watch what you're saying. My accompaniment of the Tang Monk is no private matter, for Heaven and Earth know that Sun Wukong is his disciple. He didn't banish me back here; he told me to come home and relax a little before joining him again. That's what this whole thing is about. You all must take good care of our property and don't fail to plant the willows and the pines in due seasons. Wait till I finish accompanying the Tang Monk and taking the scriptures back to the Land of the East. After that merit is achieved, I'll return to enjoy the joys of nature with you." Each monkey obeyed the instructions.

The Great Sage then mounted the clouds with 8 Rules to leave the cave and cross the Great Eastern Ocean. When they reached the western shore, he stopped the cloudy luminosity, saying, "Brother, please stop for a moment and let me go down to the ocean to clean up my body."

"We're in a hurry," said 8 Rules. "Why do you need to clean up your body?"

Pilgrim said, "You've no idea that the few days since I went back there have caused me to pick up some monster odour. Master loves cleanliness and I fear that he might be disgusted with me." Only then did 8 Rules fully realise that Pilgrim was utterly sincere. In a moment the Great Sage finished bathing and mounted the clouds again to proceed westward. Soon they saw the luminescent gold pagoda, to which 8 Rules pointed and said, "Isn't that the house of the Yellow Robe Fiend? Sand-monk's still inside."

"Stay in the air," said Pilgrim, "and let me go down to his door to see what I can do about fighting with the monster."

8 Rules said, "Don't go, the monster is not at home."

"I know," said Pilgrim. Dear Monkey King! Lowering his auspicious luminosity, he went straight to the entrance of the cave, in front of which he found two young boys playing field hockey. One was about eight or nine years of age, and the other was over ten years old. As they were playing, Pilgrim rushed forward and with no regard at all for whichever family they belonged to, grabbed them by the tufts of their hair and picked them up. Terrified, the boys began to brawl and scream so loudly that the little fiends in the Current-Moon Cave ran to report to the princess, saying, "Lady, some unknown person has carried off the two young princes." The two boys were the sons of the princess and the monster.

When the princess heard that, she ran out of the cave where she saw Pilgrim holding the two boys. Standing on top of a cliff, he was about to dash them to the ground below. "Hey, you!" screamed the horrified princess. "I've no quarrel with you. Why did you take them away? Their old man is rather mean, and if anything happens to them, he'll not let you get away with it."

"You don't recognise me?" said Pilgrim. "I'm Pilgrim Sun Wukong, the eldest disciple of the Tang Monk. My younger brother, Sand-monk, is in your cave. You go and release him, and I'll return these boys to you; to you, for one, you're getting a bargain already." When the princess heard what he said, she went quickly inside and told the few little monsters guarding the door to step aside. With her own hands, she untied Sand-monk. "Princess, you'd better not untie me," said Sand-monk. "When your fiend comes home and demands the prisoner from you, I fear that you'd take the blame again." The princess said, "Elder, you're my benefactor; not only did you send a letter to my home in my behalf but you also saved my life. I was trying to think of a way to release you when your eldest brother Sun Wukong showed up at the door of our cave. He told me to release you." Holla! When Sand-monk heard the name of Sun Wukong, he felt as if his head had been anointed with mellow juice, as if his heart had been moistened with sweet dew. Joy flooded his countenance; his whole face lit up with spring. He did not behave like someone who heard the announcement of a person's arrival but rather like someone who had just discovered a block of gold or jade. Look at him! Flapping his hands to brush off the dust on his clothes, he ran out the door and saluted to Pilgrim, saying, "Elder Brother, you've truly descended from Heaven! Save me, I beseech you."

"O, you Sandy Bonze!" said Pilgrim with a chuckle. "When Master recited the Tight-Fillet Spell, were you willing to say a word for me? You're just as much a braggart! Why aren't you accompanying Master to go to the West? What are you squatting here for?"

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "no need to talk like that anymore. A gentleman forgives and forgets. We're commanders of a defeated army, hardly worthy to speak of courage. Please save us."

Pilgrim said, "Come up," and Sand-monk leaped up to the cliff.

When 8 Rules who was standing in mid-air, saw Sand-monk coming out of the cave, he dropped down from the clouds, crying, "Brother Sand! You've had a hard time!" Seeing him, Sand-monk said, "Second Elder Brother where did you come from?" 8 Rules said, "After I was defeated yesterday, I went into the city at night where I learned from the white horse that Master was in great difficulty. He was changed into a tiger by the magic of Yellow Robe. The white horse suggested to me that I'd go ask Big Brother to come back."

"Idiot," said Pilgrim, "let's not chitchat. Each of you take one of these boys and go into the Precious Image City to provoke the fiend to come here, so that I can slay him."

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "how do you want us to provoke him?" Pilgrim said, "The two of you'd mount the clouds and stand above the Palace of the Golden Chimes. Don't bother about the consequence: just hurl the boys down to the ground before the white jade steps. If anyone asks you whose kids they are, just tell them that they are the sons of the Yellow Robe monster caught by the two of you. When the fiend hears this, he will certainly want to return here. I don't want to fight with him inside the city because our battle will scatter cloud and mist, throw up dirt and dust. The officials of the court and the city's whole populace will then be disturbed."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules with a giggle, "the moment you do anything, you start to bamboozle us."

"What do you mean?" asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules replied, "These two kids, after having been seized by you like that, are already shocked beyond cure. Just now they cried till they became voiceless; after a while, they will die for sure. If we hurl them to the ground from the air, they'll turn into meat patties. You think the fiend will let us go once he catches up with us? He will surely make us pay with our lives while you get away scot free. There's not even a witness against you! Aren't you bamboozling us?"

"If he tangles with the two of you," said Pilgrim, "just lure him here. We've a smooth and wide battlefield at this place, and I'll be waiting for him."

"Exactly, exactly," said Sand-monk. "Big Brother is right. Let's go." Riding on the power and assurance of Pilgrim, the two of them picked up the boys and left.

Pilgrim leaped down from the boulder and went before the door of the pagoda. "Hey, Monk," said the princess, "you're completely untrustworthy. You said that you'd give me back my boys once your younger brother was released. Now that he is, you're still detaining my boys. What are you doing here instead?" Pilgrim smiled at her and said, "Don't be offended, princess. You've been here for a long time, and I thought that we'd take your sons to present them to their maternal grandpa." The princess said, "Monk, you'd better behave! My husband, Yellow Robe, is no ordinary person. If you've frightened my boys, you'd try to comfort them first."

"Princess," said Pilgrim with a chuckle, "do you know what is considered a crime for a human being living in this world?"

"I do," said the princess. Pilgrim said, "You're a woman! What do you know?"

"Since the time of my youth in the palace," said the princess, "I was taught by my parents. I recall an ancient book said, 'Set against the Five Punishments are some three thousand crimes but none's greater than an un-filial act.'"<sup>3</sup>

Pilgrim said, "You're precisely an un-filial person. Remember: *O my dad,<sup>4</sup> who begot me! O my mum who'd nursed me! ... Pity my parents, how hard they toiled to bear me!* Therefore, filial piety's the foundation of a hundred virtuous acts, the source of all morality. How'd you entrust your body to be the mate of a monster-spirit and not think of your parents at all? Haven't you committed the crime of an un-filial act?"

When the princess heard these words of rectitude, she was so embarrassed that she blushed for a long time before blurting out her reply, saying, "The words of the elder are most righteous. How could I not think of my parents? But all my troubles began when the monster kidnapped me here. His orders are very strict, and I can't travel at all. The distance, furthermore, is great and there is no one able to send word for me. I wanted to commit suicide but I was afraid that my parents would suspect that I'd eloped with someone, and the whole matter would not be cleared up. I'd, therefore, no alternative but to prolong my fragile existence. Indeed, I'm a great criminal in this whole wide world!" When she finished speaking, tears streamed down her face.

Pilgrim said, "Princess, there's no need for you to be sorrowful. Bullseye 8 Rules did tell me that you wrote a letter and you saved my master's life. You did express your thoughts for your parents in the letter. Now that old monkey has arrived, you may be assured that he will catch the monster for you and bring him back to court to see the Throne. You can then find a worthy mate and look after your parents in their old age. How about it?"

"Monk," said the princess, "don't look for certain death. Those two younger brothers of yours were quite tough but they could not overcome my husband, Yellow Robe, during the fight yesterday. Now look at you! You look like a ghost with more tendons than bones! You look like a crab or a walking skeleton! What kind of ability do you've that you dare speak of catching the monster?" Laughing, Pilgrim said, "You really don't have much judgement, and you can't discriminate between persons. As the common saying has it, *a urine bladder, though large, has no weight; a steelyard weight, though small, licks a thousand pounds.* They may look big but they are useless: creating wind resistance as they walk and wasting cloth when they put on clothes. They may be big as a mountain but they are hollow inside; their heads may touch door frames but they are slack of torsos; and they may eat a lot but food won't do them any good. I, old monkey, am small, all right but hardy."

"You really have the skills?" asked the princess. "Nothing that you've ever seen," said Pilgrim, "but I specialize in subduing monsters and taming demons."

"You'd better not get me into trouble," said the princess. "Certainly not," said Pilgrim. "If you're able to subdue monsters and tame demons," said the princess, "how will you go about catching him?"

Pilgrim said, "You'd better be out of sight, or else I can't really move when he gets here. I'm afraid that you still have a lot of feelings for him and can't give him up."

"What do you mean by not giving him up?" said the princess. "My remaining here is not of my choice!"

"If you've been husband and wife for thirteen years," said Pilgrim, "you can't be wholly without affection. But when I see him, I'll not be fooling around: a stroke of the rod will be a stroke, and a punch will be a punch. I've to slay him before I can take you back to court to see the Throne."

The princess indeed followed Pilgrim's advice and went off to a secluded spot. Her marriage to the monster, moreover, was fated to end, and that was why the Great Sage made his appearance. After he had the princess hidden, the Monkey King shook his body once and changed into the form of the princess to enter the cave and wait for the monster. 8 Rules and Sand-monk took the 2 boys to the Precious Image Kingdom and dashed them to the ground before the white jade steps. Alas! They were reduced to two meat patties; their bones were all crushed and blood splattered all over. "Terrible! Terrible!" cried the officials in court. "Two persons have been thrown down from the sky!"

"These boys," shouted 8 Rules from above, "are the sons of the monster, Yellow Robe. They were caught by Old bull and Brother Sand."

Still under the effect of juice, the fiend was sleeping in the Silver Peace Palace when he heard someone shouting his name. He turned over and looked up: there were Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk standing on the edge of the clouds hollering. The monster thought to himself: "If it were just Bullseye 8 Rules, I'd understand this but Sand-monk was tied up in my house. How could he get here? Why would my wife let him go? How could my boys land in their hands? Could it be that Bullseye 8 Rules, fearful of my unwillingness to do battle with him, is using this to trick me? I can take the bait and go fight with him. Hey! I'm still hungover. If he gives me a whack with his rake, I'll lose all my credibility. Let me go home first and see if they are indeed my sons or not. Then I can speak to these monks." *Dear monster!*

Without taking leave of the king, he headed straight for his cave in the mountain forest to investigate. At this time, people in the court knew full well that he was indeed a monster. For he ate one of the palace maids during the night but the seventeen others who escaped made a thorough report to the king after the hour of the fifth watch. Since he left so abruptly, they knew all the more that he was without doubt a monster. All the king could do was to order the many officials to guard the specious tiger. The fiend went back to the cave. When Pilgrim saw him arriving, he at once devised a plan of deception. He blinked a few times and tears began to fall like rain; stamping his feet, pounding his chest, and calling for the boys all the time, he bawled lustily in the cave. So sudden an encounter made it impossible for the fiend to recognise that this was not his wife. He went forward instead and embraced Pilgrim, saying, "Mistress, why are you so upset?"

With artful invention with imaginative fable, the Great Sage said tearfully, "Dear Husband! As the proverb says, *if a man's no wife, his wealth has no boss; if a girl's no mate, she's completely lost!* After you went into court yesterday to present yourself to the kinfolks, why didn't you return? This morning Bullseye 8 Rules came back and robbed us of Sand-monk. Furthermore, they took away our two boys by force despite my desperate pleadings. They said that they would also bring the boys into court to present them to their maternal grandpa. Half a day has gone by already and there's no sight of our boys or even news of whether they are alive or dead. And you didn't turn up until just now. How could I part with my babies? That's why I'm so broken up." When the fiend heard those words, he grew very angry, saying, "Did that really happen to my sons?"

"Yes," said Pilgrim, "and they were taken away by Bullseye 8 Rules."

The demon was so incensed that he jumped about madly, crying, "Undone! Undone! My sons have been dashed to death by him! They can't be revived! The only thing left is to catch that monk and make him pay with his life. Mistress, don't cry. How do you feel now? Let's take care of you first."

"I'm all right," said Pilgrim, "but I miss my babies so much, and all that weeping has caused my heart to ache."

"No need to worry," said the demon. "Get up first. I've a treasure here; all you need to do is to rub it on the painful spot and it will not hurt anymore. But you must be careful not to fillip your thumb onto the treasure, for if you do, my true form will reveal itself." When Pilgrim heard this, he said, smiling, to himself, "This brazen creature! He's quite honest; even without torture he has made a confession already. Wait till he brings out his treasure. I'm going to strike at it with my thumb and see what kind of monster he is." Leading Pilgrim, the fiend took his companion into the murky depth of the cave before spitting out from his mouth a treasure having the size and shape of a chicken egg. It was an internal elixir, formed crystalline white like a śāṛīra.<sup>5</sup> Secretly delighted, Pilgrim said to himself,

"Marvellous thing! God knows how many sedentary exercises had been performed, how many years of trials and sufferings had elapsed, how many times the union of male and female forces had taken place before this sarīra of internal elixir was formed. What great affinity it has today that it should encounter old monkey!"

The monkey took it over. Of course, he did not have any pain but he rubbed it deliberately on his body somewhere before filipping his thumb at it. Alarmed, the fiend immediately stretched forth his hand to try to snatch it away. Think of it! This monkey is just too slick and shifty a character! He popped the treasure in his mouth and with one gulp swallowed it whole. The demon raised his fist and punched at him, only to be parried by the arm of Pilgrim. With his other hand, Pilgrim wiped his own face once and changed back to his original appearance, crying, "Monster, don't be unruly! Take a look! Who am I?"

When the fiend saw what he saw, he was greatly shaken, saying "Gosh, Mistress! How did you manage to bring out a face like that?"

"You impudent imp!" chided Pilgrim. "Who's your mistress? You can't even recognise your own ancestor!" Suddenly comprehending, the fiend said, "I think I know you." Pilgrim said, "I'll not hit you just yet, take another look." The fiend said, "Though you do look familiar, I just can't think of your name at the moment. Who indeed are you? Where do you come from? Where have you moved my wife? How dare you come to my house to cheat me of my treasure? This is most reprehensible!"

"So you don't recognise me," said Pilgrim. "I'm the eldest disciple of the Tang Monk, and my name is Pilgrim Sun Wukong. I'm also your old ancestor of five centuries ago!" The fiend said, "No such thing! No such thing! When I caught the Tang Monk, I found out that he had only two disciples named Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk. No one had ever mentioned that there was someone by the name of Sun. You must be a fiend from somewhere who came here to deceive me."

"The reason why I didn't accompany the two of them," said Pilgrim, "was because my habitual slaying of monsters had offended my master. A kind and compassionate person, he dismissed me when I slaughtered one too many. That's why I was not travelling with him. Are you still ignorant of your ancestor's name?"

"How feckless you're!" said the fiend, "If you're banished by your master, how could you've the gumption to face people here?"

Pilgrim said, "You impudent creature! You'd not know about the sentiment of 'Once a teacher, always a dad,' nor would you know that 'Between dad and son, there's no overnight enmity.' If you plan to harm my master, you think I'd not come to rescue him? And you didn't stop at that; you even abused me behind my back. What have you got to say to that?"

"Since when did I abuse you?" asked the fiend. Pilgrim replied, "Bullseye 8 Rules said you did."

"Don't believe him," said the fiend. "That Bullseye 8 Rules with his pointed horn, has a tongue like an old maid's! Why do you listen to him?"

"No need for such idle talk," said Pilgrim. "I'll just say that during old monkey's visit to your house today, you've not shown your distant guest sufficient hospitality. Though you may not have food and juice to entertain your visitor, you've a head. Stick it over here quickly and let old monkey beat it once with the rod. I'll consider that my taking tea." When the fiend heard this, he roared with laughter, saying, "Pilgrim Sun, you've miscalculated! If you wanted to fight, you'd not have followed me here. The various imps under my command, young and old, number in the hundreds. Though you may have arms all over your body, you'll be unable to fight your way out."

Pilgrim said, "Don't talk rot! And don't mention a few hundred! Even if you've hundreds of thousands, just call them up one by one and I'll slay them. Every stroke of my rod will find its mark. I guarantee that they'll be wiped out! Exterminated!" When the monster heard these words, he quickly gave the order and called up all the monsters before and behind the mountain, all the fiends in and out of the cave. Each holding weapons, they lined up thickly and completely barricaded the several doors inside the cave. When Pilgrim saw this, he was delighted. Gripping his rod with both hands, he shouted "Change!" and changed at once into a person having 3 heads and 6 arms. 1 wave of the golden-hooped rod and it changed into three golden-hooped rods. *Look at him! 6 arms wielding the 3 rods, he plunged into the crowd – like a tiger mauling a herd of sheep and an eagle alighting on chicken coops. Pity those little fiends! One touch and heads were smashed to pieces! One brush and blood flowed like water!*

He charged back and forth as if he had invaded an uninhabited region. When he finished, there was only 1 old monster left who chased him out the door crying, "You brazen ape! You're nasty and noxious! You dare oppress people right at their own door!"

Spinning around, Pilgrim waved at him crying, "Come! Come! It's no merit until I've struck you down." Lifting his scimitar, the monster aimed at his opponent's head and hacked away as dear Pilgrim brandished the iron rod to face him. This time they fought on top of the mountain, halfway between mist and cloud. *Great Sage had great magic power; the demon had vast abilities. This one struck sideways with the raw iron rod; that 1 raised aslant the steel scimitar. The scimitar rose softly, and bright mist glowed; the rod parried lightly, and coloured clouds flew. Back and forth it circled to protect the head; round and round it turned to guard the body. 1 followed the wind to change his looks; 1 shook his body standing on the ground. This 1 widened his fiery eyes and stretched his simian arms; that 1 flared his golden pupils and bent his tiger-like waist. Coming and going, they fought round and round – rod and scimitar giving blow for blow. The Monkey King's rod conformed to battle art; the fiend's scimitar followed the rules of war. 1 had always worked his skills to be a demon-lord; 1 had used his vast power to guard the Tang Monk. The fierce Monkey King became fiercer; the violent monster grew more violent. Heedless of life or death they fought in the air, all for Tang Monk's quest for God from afar.* The 2 of them fought for over fifty rounds but a decision could not be reached. Secretly pleased, Pilgrim thought to himself, "The scimitar of this brazen monster is quite a match for the rod of old monkey! Let me pretend to blunder and see if he can detect it." *Dear Monkey King!* He raised the rod above his head with both his hands, using the style of *Tail-Testing the Horse*. The fiend did not perceive that it was a trick. When he saw that there was a chance, he wielded the scimitar and slashed at the lower third of Pilgrim's body. Pilgrim quickly employed the *Great Middle Level* to fend off the scimitar after which he followed up with the style of *Stealing Peaches beneath the Leaves* and brought the rod down hard on the monster's head. This 1 blow made the monster vanish completely. He retrieved his rod to look around but the monster-spirit was nowhere to be seen. Greatly startled, Pilgrim said, "O my child! You can't take much beating! One stroke and you're dead! But even if you're beaten to death, there'd be some blood or pus left. Why isn't there a trace of you? I suppose you must've escaped." Leaping up quickly to the edge of the clouds, he stared in all 4 directions but there was the faintest movement nowhere. "These two eyes of old monkey," he said, "can see everything anywhere. How'd he vanish just like that? Ah I know! That fiend said that he recognised me somewhat and that meant that he'd not possibly be an ordinary monster of this world. Most likely he's a spirit from Heaven."

Unable to suppress his anger, the Great Sage somersaulted all at once and leaped up to the South Heavenly Gate, wielding his iron rod. Pang, Liu, Gou, Bi, Zhang, Tao, Deng, Xin, and the other celestial captains, were so startled that they saluted on both sides of the gate and dared not stop him. He fought his way in and arrived before the Hall of Perfect Light. Zhang, Ge, Xu, and Qiu, the Celestial Masters, asked him, "Why did the Great Sage come here?"

"Because I accompanied the Tang Monk until the Precious Image Kingdom," said Pilgrim, "where there was a demon who had seduced the princess and sought to harm my master. Old monkey waged a contest with him but as we're fighting I suddenly lost him. I don't think he's an ordinary fiend of Earth; he has to be a spirit from Heaven. I came especially to investigate whether any monster deity has left the ranks." When the Celestial Masters heard this, they entered the Hall of Divine Mists to make the report, and an order immediately was issued to take the roll among the Nine Luminaries, the Twelve Branches, the Five Planets of the Five Quarters, the numerous gods of the Milky Way, the gods of the Five Mountains, and the Four Rivers. Every one of the Heavenly deities was present, for none dared to leave his post. The investigation was then extended beyond the Big Dipper Palace and the count had turned up only 27 members back and forth among the 28 Constellations. Revatī, the Wood-Wolf Star<sup>6</sup> was missing. The Preceptors returned to report to the Throne, saying "Revatī, the Wood-Wolf Star, has left for the Region Below."

The Jade Emperor said, "For how long has he been away from Heaven?"

"He's absent for four muster-roll calls," said the Preceptors. "The roll's taken once every three days so today's the thirteenth day."

"The thirteenth day in Heaven," said the Jade Emperor, "is the thirteenth year on Earth."

He thereupon gave the order for the Star's own department to recall him back to Heaven. After having received the decree, the 38 Constellations went out of the Heavenly Gate and each of them recited a spell that aroused Revatī. He was hiding. The Star actually had been a celestial warrior who was terror stricken when the Great Sage caused great disturbance in Heaven previously. Just now, the Star hid himself in a mountain stream, and the water vapour had covered up his monster-cloud. That was why he could not be seen. Only when he heard his own colleagues reciting their spells did he dare emerge and follow the crowd to return to the Region Above. He was met by the Great Sage at the gate who wanted to hit him but fortunately the other Stars managed to put a stop to it. He was then taken to see the Jade Emperor. Taking out the golden plaque from his waist, the fiend knelt below the steps of the hall and respected, admitting his guilt. "Revatī, the Wood-Wolf Star," said the Jade Emperor, "there's boundless beauty in the Region Above. Instead of enjoying this, you chose to visit in secret another region. Why?"

"Your Majesty," said Revatī the Star, respecting, "please pardon the mortal offence of your subject. The princess of the Precious Image Kingdom is no ordinary mortal; she is actually the jade girl in charge of incense in the Spread Incense Hall. She wanted to have an affair with your subject who was afraid however, that this act would defile the noble region of the Celestial Palace. Longing for the world, she went first to the Region Below where she assumed human form in the imperial palace. Your subject, not wanting to disappoint her, changed himself into a demon. After I occupied a famous mountain, I abducted her to my cave dwelling where we became husband and wife for thirteen years. Thus 'not even a sup or a bite is not foreordained,' and it is fated that Great Sage Sun should accomplish his merit at this time." When the Jade Emperor heard these words, he ordered that the Star's golden plaque be taken away from him; he was then banished to the Tushita Palace to be a paid fire-tender for Laozi with the stipulation that he would be restored to his rank if he made merit, and that he would be punished further if he did not.

When Pilgrim saw how the Jade Emperor disposed of the matter, he was so pleased that he saluted deeply to the Throne. Then he said to the other deities, "All of you, thanks for taking the trouble."

"This ape's," said one of the Masters, laughing, "still so uncouth! We've taken captive for him the monster-god, and instead of showing his gratitude to the Heavenly Grace properly, he leaves after only taking a salute."

The Jade Emperor said, "We count it our good fortune already if he starts no trouble and leaves Heaven in peace."

Lowering the direction of his auspicious luminosity, the Great Sage went back directly to the Current-Moon Cave of the Casserole Mountain where he found the princess. As he was just giving her an account of all that went before, they heard 8 Rules and Sand-monk shouting in mid-air, "Elder Brother, save a few monster-spirits for us to beat, too."

"They're all finished," said Pilgrim. "In that case," said Sand-monk, "nothing should detain us here. Let's bring the princess back to court. Brothers, let's do the magic of Shortening the Ground."

All the princess heard was the rushing of wind, and in a moment, they were back in the city. The three of them brought the princess up to the Palace of the Golden Chimes where she saluted reverently to her parents and met again her sisters. Thereafter, the various officials all came to pay their respects. "We're truly beholden to Elder Sun," said the princess to the Throne, "whose boundless religion power subdued the Yellow Robe Fiend and brought me back to our kingdom."

"What kind of monster is that Yellow Robe?" asked the king. Pilgrim said, "The son-in-law of Your Majesty happens to be the Star Revatī from the Region Above, and your daughter was the jade girl in charge of incense. Because of her longing for the world, they both descended to Earth to assume human forms. It was no small thing that they should consummate a marriage contracted in their previous existence. When old monkey went to the Celestial Palace to report to the Jade Emperor, it was discovered that the fiend had not answered the muster-roll for four times. This meant that he had left Heaven for thirteen days, and correspondingly thirteen years had passed on Earth, for a day in Heaven is a year down here. The Jade Emperor ordered the Constellations of his department to recall him to the Region Above where he was then banished to work for further merit in the Tushita Palace. Old monkey was then able to bring back your daughter." After the king had thanked Pilgrim for his kindness, he said, "Let's go and take a look at your master."

The three disciples followed the king and descended from the treasure hall to go into one of the chambers in the court where the officials brought out the iron cage and loosened the chains on the specious tiger. Everyone still saw the tiger as a tiger but Pilgrim alone saw him as a man. The master was imprisoned by diabolical magic; though he understood everything, he could neither walk nor open his eyes or mouth. "Master," said Pilgrim, laughing, "You're a good monk. How did you manage to end up with a fearsome look like that? You blamed me for working evil and violence and banished me. You claimed that you wanted to practice virtue single-mindedly. How did you acquire such features all at once?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "please save him. Don't just ridicule him."

"You pick on me in everything," said Pilgrim, "and you're his favourite disciple. Why don't you save him? Why do you ask old monkey instead? Remember what I said originally, that after I'd subdued the monster to avenge myself from his abuse, I'd go back." Sand-monk drew near and knelt down, saying, "Elder Brother, the ancients said, 'If you don't regard the priest, do regard a god.' If you're here, I beseech you to save him. If we'd do so, we'd not have travelled all that distance to plead with you." Raising him with his hands, Pilgrim said, "How could I possibly be content not to save him? Get me some water, quick!"

8 Rules rushed back to the posthouse and took out the purple gold alms bowl from the luggage. He returned and handed to Pilgrim the bowl half-filled with water. As he took the water in his hand, Pilgrim recited a magic spell and spat a mouthful of water on the tiger. At once the diabolical magic was dispelled and the tiger-like illusion was broken. After the elder had appeared in his original body, he recovered sufficiently to open his eyes and recognise Pilgrim whom he took hold of with his hands immediately. "Wukong," he cried, "where did you come from?"

Standing to one side, Sand-monk gave a thorough account of what had taken place, and Tripitaka was filled with gratitude, saying, "Worthy disciple, I owe you everything! I owe you everything! Let's hope that we'll reach the West soon. When we return to the Land of the East, I'll report to the Tang emperor that yours is the highest merit."

"Don't mention it! Don't mention it!" said Pilgrim with laughter. "Just don't recite that little something and your living kindness will be most appreciated." When the king heard this, he also gave thanks to all 4 of them before preparing a huge vegetarian banquet for them in the Eastern Palace. After they had enjoyed these royal favours, master and disciples took leave of the king and headed for the West. The king led all his ministers through great distance to send them off. So it was that *the king returned to the palace, his empire secured; the monk went to worship God at Thunderclap.*



The sentinel brings a message on Level-Top Mountain; Wood Mum meets disaster at Lotus-Flower Cave

The Tang Monk who acquired again the service of Pilgrim Sun; master and disciples thereupon embarked on the road to the West, united once more in heart and mind. After they had rescued the princess of the Precious Image Kingdom and been sent off by its king and officials, they journeyed without ceasing, taking food and drink when they hungered and thirsted, resting by night and travelling by day. Soon it was again the time of Triple Spring, a season when *light breezes blow on willow green as silk, a lovely scene fittest for verse. The times hasten bird poems; the warmth kindles flowers, fragrant blooms all around. A pair of swallows comes to the apple court, 'just in time to enjoy spring: red dust on purple paths,* <sup>2</sup>*strings, pipes, and the silk gowns, games and passing the juice cups.* <sup>3</sup> As master and disciples walked and enjoyed the scenery, they found another mountain barring their way. "Disciples," said the Tang Monk, "please be careful. We've a tall mountain before us. I fear that tigers and wolves might be here to obstruct us."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "a man who's left the family should not speak as those who remain in the family. Don't you remember the words of the *Heart Thread*<sup>4</sup> given to you by that Crow's Nest Priest: 'No hindrances, and therefore, no terror or fear; he is far removed from error and delusion'? Only you must *sweep away the filth of your mind and wash off the dust by your ears. Not tasting the most painful of pain, you'll never be a man among men.* You mustn't worry, for if you've old monkey, everything will be all right even if the sky collapses. Don't be afraid of any tiger or wolf!"

Pulling in the reins of his horse, the elder said, "Since I *departed Chang'an that year by decree, my sole thought fixed on God in the West – that bright, golden image in Sari-land, those jade-white brows in the pagoda blessed. I searched through this world's waters without name; I climbed all the mountains unscaled by man. Fold upon fold the mists and waves extend when can I myself attain true leisure?*"

When Pilgrim heard what he said, he roared with laughter, saying, "If Master wants true leisure, it's not that difficult! When you achieve your merit, then all the causes<sup>5</sup> will cease and all forms will be but emptiness. At that time, leisure will come to you most naturally."

Hearing these words, the elder had to be content to put aside his anxiety and urge his horse on. Master and disciples began to ascend the mountain that was truly rugged and treacherous. *Marvellous Mountain! The tall, rugged peak; the sharp, pointed summit. Within the deep, winding brook – beside the lone, rugged cliff – within the deep, winding brook you hear water loudly splashing as a serpent turns; beside the lone, rugged cliff see the big mountain tiger wagging its tail. Look above: the jutting peaks stab through the green sky. Turn your eyes: the canyon's deep and dark as the empyrean. Start climbing: it's like a ladder, a stair. Walk down there: it's like a moat, a ditch. It's truly a weird, hillock-ed range; indeed a steep-banked precipice. On top of the hillock-ed range the herb-picker is wary of walking; before the precipice the woodsman finds it hard to move an inch! Foreign goats and wild horses madly gallop; wily hares and mountain bulls seem to form in ranks. The mountain's height does hide the sun and stars; 1 often meets strange creatures and white wolves. Through dense grassy path the horse can hardly pass. How'd one see God at Thunderclap?* As the elder pulled back his horse to survey this mountain that was so difficult to ascend, he saw a woodcutter standing on the green slope above. He was dressed as such: *his head wore an old rain hat of blue felt; he had on him a monk-robe of black wool. The old rain hat of blue felt: indeed a rare thing to ward off sunlight and mists; the monk-robe of black wool: a sign of utter contentment rarely seen. His hands held a steel axe polished highly; he tied his machete-cut firewood firmly. The spring hues at the ends of his pole quietly overflowed in all 4 seasons; his carefree life as a recluse had always been blessed by the 3 Stars.* <sup>6</sup>*He resigned himself to grow old in his lot. What glory or shame could invade his world?* That woodcutter *was just chopping firewood before the slope when the elder came abruptly from the East. He stopped his axe to go out of the woods and walked with big strides up the rocky ledge.* In a severe voice, he cried out to the elder, "The elder who's going toward the West, please stop for a moment. I've something to tell you. There is a bunch of vicious demons and cruel monsters in this mountain devoted to eating travellers who come from the East and go toward the West."

When the elder heard what he said, his spirit left him and his soul fled. He shook so violently that he could hardly sit on the saddle. Turning around quickly, he shouted to his disciples, "Did you hear what the wood-cutter said about the vicious demons and cruel monsters? Which of you dare go and ask him in greater detail?"

"Master, relax!" said Pilgrim. "Old monkey will go and question him thoroughly." *Dear Pilgrim!* He strode up the mountain and addressed the woodcutter as "Big Brother" before saluting him with folded hands.

The woodcutter returned his greeting saying, "Elder, why did you people come here?"

"To tell you the truth, Big Brother," said Pilgrim, "we're sent from the Land of the East to go acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. That one on the horse is my master. He is rather timid; when he heard just now what you said about vicious demons and cruel monsters, he asked me to question you. For how many years have there been demons and monsters? Are they real professionals, or are they just amateurs? Let Big Brother take the trouble to tell me, so that I may order the mountain god and the local spirit to send them away in custody." When the woodcutter heard these words, he faced the sky and roared with laughter, saying, "So, you're really a mad monk!"

"I'm not mad," said Pilgrim, "and this is the honest truth."

"If you're honest," said the woodcutter, "how dare you talk about sending them away in custody?"

Pilgrim said, "The way you're magnifying their power, the way you've stopped us with your foolish announcement and silly report, could it be that you're somehow related to these monsters? If you're not a relative, you must be a neighbour; if not a neighbour, you must be a friend."

"You mad, impudent monk!" said the woodcutter, laughing. "You're so unreasonable! My intentions were good and that was why I made a special effort to bring this message to you, so that you'd take precaution at all times when you journey. Now you're blaming me instead. Let's not say just yet that I don't know anything about the origin of those monsters. But suppose you've found that out, how would you dispose of them? Where would you send them away in custody?"

"If they are demons from Heaven," said Pilgrim, "I'll send them to see the Jade Emperor. If they are demons of Earth, I'll send them to the Palace of Earth. Those of the West will be returned to God; those of the East will be returned to the sages; those of the North will be returned to Zhenwu; <sup>7</sup>those of the South will be returned to Mars. <sup>8</sup>If they're dragon spirits, they will be sent to the Lords of Oceans; if they are ghosts and ogres, they will be sent to King Yama. Every class has its proper place and direction and old monkey is familiar with all of them. All I need to do is to issue a court order, and they will be sent off in a hurry. Even at night!"

The woodcutter could hardly stop his scornful laughter, saying, "You mad, impudent monk! You must have made a pilgrimage to some place and learned some paltry magic of drawing up charms and casting spells with water. You may be able to drive away demons and suppress ghosts but you've never run into such vicious and cruel monsters."

"In what way are they vicious and cruel?" asked Pilgrim.

The woodcutter said, "The length of this mountain range is about six hundred miles, and it's called the Level-Top Mountain. In the mountain is a cave by the name of Lotus-Flower Cave. There are two old demons in the cave who had portraits made with the intent to catch the priests, and who had names and surnames written down because they insisted on eating the Tang Monk. If you've come from another region, you might get by but if you're in any way associated with the word *Tang* you'll never pass here."

"We're exactly those who have come from the Tang court," said Pilgrim.

The woodcutter said, "And they specifically want to devour you."

"Lucky! Lucky!" said Pilgrim. "How would they like to eat us?"

"Why do you ask?" said the woodcutter.

"If they want to eat me headfirst," said Pilgrim, "it's still manageable but if they want to eat me feet-first, it'll be more bothersome."

The woodcutter asked, "What's the difference between eating you headfirst and feet-first?"

"You've not experienced this," replied Pilgrim. "If he eats me headfirst, one bite will kill me, of course. Even if he were to fry, sauté, braise, or boil me thereafter, I'd not know the pain. But if he eats me feet-first, he can start by munching on my shanks and then proceed to gnaw on my thighs. He can devour me up to my pelvic bones, and I still might not die in a hurry. Will I not be left to suffer bit by bit? That's why it is bothersome."

"Monk," said the woodcutter, "he is not going to spend all that effort on you. All he wants is to catch you and have you bound in a large steamer. Once you're cooked, he'll eat you whole!"

"That's even better! That's even better!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "There won't be pain; I've to endure a little stuffiness, that's all."

"Don't be so sassy, monk," said the woodcutter, "for those monsters have with them five treasures which possess tremendous magic powers. Even if you happen to be the jade pillar that holds up the sky, or the golden bridge that spans the ocean, if you want to protect the priest of the Tang court and pass this place safely, you'll have to become a little mad."

"For how many times?" asked Pilgrim.

"At least three or four times," replied the woodcutter.

Pilgrim said, "That's nothing! Throughout a year, we must've become mad for seven or eight hundred times. These three or four – what's that to us? A little madness and we're through." *Dear Great Sage!* He was not afraid at all. Eager only to accompany the Tang Monk, he abandoned the woodcutter and returned with big strides to where the horse was standing before the mountain slope.

"Master, it's nothing serious," he said. "There're a couple of puny monster-spirits to be sure but people around here're rather timid and overly concerned. You've me so why worry? Let's get going! Let's get going!"

He had no choice but to proceed when the elder heard what he said. The woodcutter vanished as they walked. The elder said, "Why did that woodcutter who brought us the message disappear all at once?"

"Our luck must be rather poor," said 8 Rules, "we've met a ghost in broad daylight."

"He must have crawled back into the forest to find firewood," said Pilgrim. "Let me take a look."

Dear Great Sage! He opened wide his fiery eyes and diamond pupils to scan the mountain far and near but there was no trace of the woodcutter. He raised his head and suddenly saw the Day Sentinel on the edge of the clouds. Mounting the clouds, he gave chase immediately, shouting several times, "Clumsy devil!" When he caught up with the deity, he said, "If you had something to say, why didn't you present yourself and speak plainly? Why did you've to put on all that transformation to make fun of old monkey?" The sentinel was so frightened that he saluted before he said, "Great Sage, please do not take offence at my tardiness in bringing you the news. Those fiends do have great magic powers, and they know many ways of transformation. It's up to you to use all your cleverness, to exercise all your divine intelligence to guard your master carefully. If you're the slightest bit negligent, you can't get through this road to reach the Western Heaven."

When Pilgrim heard this, he drove away the sentinel, though the words he kept firmly in his mind. Lowering the direction of his cloud, he returned to the mountain. As he saw the elder proceeding with 8 Rules and Sand-monk, he thought to himself, "If I give an honest account of what the sentinel said to Master, he will weep for sure. He's so weak! If I don't tell him the truth, I can put something over him and lead him forward. But as the proverb says, 'Wading suddenly into a swamp, you can't tell if it's deep or shallow.' If Master indeed were to be taken by the monsters, won't old monkey be asked to expend his energy again? Let me take good care of 8 Rules instead. I'm going to make him go and wage a battle with those monsters first and see what happens; if he wins, we'll consider that to be his merit. If his abilities are no good and he is caught by the monsters, there will still be time for old monkey to go rescue him. I can display my powers then and further spread my fame."

Using the mind to question the mind, he was thus deliberating with himself. <sup>1</sup>I fear that 8 Rules is so lazy that he will refuse to volunteer his service. Master, moreover, is so protective toward him. I'll have to use some gimmick."

Dear Great Sage! Look at the chicanery he's resorting to! Rubbing his eyes for a while, he managed to squeeze out some tears as he walked back facing his master. When 8 Rules saw that, he cried out at once, "Sand-monk, put down your pole. Bring the luggage over here and we two will divide it up."

"Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "Why divide it up?"

"Divide it!" said 8 Rules. "You can then go back to the River of Flowing Sand and become a monster again. Old bull will return to the Old Gao Village to see how my wife is doing; we can sell the white horse and buy a coffin for Master in preparation for his old age. All of us can scatter. Why bother about going to the Western Heaven?"

When the elder heard this on the horse, he said, "This coolie! We're still journeying. What's all this babble?"

"Only your son babbles!" said 8 Rules. "Don't you see that Pilgrim Sun is weeping over there as he walks toward us? He's a stalwart warrior who's not afraid of hacking by the axe, burning by fire, or even a pot of boiling oil, one who can penetrate Heaven and pierce the Earth. Now he has put on a cap of sorrow and arrived gushing tears. It has to be that the mountain is rugged, and that the monsters are truly vicious. How then do you expect weaklings like us to proceed?" The elder said, "Stop this nonsense! Let me question him and see what he says."

He therefore asked, "Wukong, if you've something to say, let's discuss the matter face to face. Why are you so distressed all by yourself? Are you trying to frighten me with that tearful face of yours?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "just now the one who brought us the message happened to be the Day Sentinel. He said that the monster-spirits were most vicious, making this place a difficult one to pass through. It is indeed a treacherous road through a tall mountain. I don't think we can go through it now; we may as well wait for another time." When the elder heard these words, he was greatly shaken. Tugging at Pilgrim's tiger-skin kilt, he said, "Disciple, we've covered almost half the journey. Why are you speaking such discouraging words?"

"I'm not un-devoted to our cause," said Pilgrim, "but I fear that the demons are many and my strength is limited if I've no help. As the saying goes, 'Even if it's a piece of iron in the furnace, how many nails can you beat out of it?'"

"Disciple," said the elder, "you've a point there. It is difficult for a single person to handle this matter, for as the military book says, 'The few cannot withstand the many.' But I've 8 Rules and Sand-monk here, both my disciples. I permit you to command and use them as you wish, so that they can serve as your helpers, someone to protect your flank. Only you'd work together to clear up a path and lead me across this mountain. Will we not then be attaining the right fruit?"

All that legerdemain of Pilgrim was aimed at eliciting from the elder these few words. He wiped away his tears, saying, "Master, if you want to cross this mountain, Bullseye 8 Rules has to agree to do two things for me. Only then will we've about a third of a chance to get by. If he doesn't agree to help me, you might as well forget about the whole matter."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "if we can't do it, let's scatter. Don't drag me down."

"Disciple," said the elder, "let's ask your Elder Brother first and see what he wants you to do." Idiot indeed said to Pilgrim, "Elder Brother, what do you want me to do?"

"The first thing is to look after Master," said Pilgrim, "and the second is to go patrol the mountain."

8 Rules said, "Looking after Master means sitting right here whereas to patrol the mountain means taking a walk somewhere. Do you want me to sit a while and walk a while? How can I do two things at once?"

"I'm not telling you to do two things at once," said Pilgrim, "but to select one only."

"That's easier to decide," said 8 Rules, chuckling, "but I don't know what's involved in looking after Master or in patrolling the mountain. Tell me something of my duties and I can then carry them out accordingly."

"To look after Master," said Pilgrim, "means that if he wants to move his bowels, you wait on him; if he wants to journey, you assist him; if he wants to eat, you go to beg for vegetarian food. If he suffers from hunger even slightly, you'll be beaten; if he pales a little, you'll be beaten; if he loses some weight, you'll be beaten."

Horried, 8 Rules said, "This is terribly difficult! Terribly difficult! To wait on him or to help him to walk – that's nothing, and even if I've to carry him bodily, it's still an easy matter. But if he wants to send me to beg for food, I fear that there might be those on this road to the West who won't recognise that I'm a monk seeking scriptures. They might think that I'm a healthy bull just reaching maturity and then have me surrounded by many people with brooms, rakes, pitchforks, and all. I'll be taken to their homes, slaughtered, and cured for the New Year. Wouldn't that be like meeting the plague?"

"Then go and patrol the mountain," said Pilgrim.

"What does that involve?" asked 8 Rules.

Pilgrim replied, "Go into the mountain and find out how many monsters there are, what kind of mountain this is, and what kind of cave there is. We can then make plans to pass through."

"This is a small thing," said 8 Rules. "Old bull will go patrol the mountain." Hitching up his garment at once, Idiot held high his muckrake and strode energetically up the road leading into the mountain. As he watched 8 Rules leave, Pilgrim could not suppress his giggles. "You impudent ape!" scolded the elder. "As a brother, you've not shown the least bit of sympathy or kindness. You're constantly envious of one another. With all that base cunning, all those 'clever words and an ingratiating appearance,'<sup>9</sup> you've managed to trick him already into the so-called patrolling the mountain. Now you're even mocking him with your laugh!"

"I'm not mocking him," said Pilgrim, "because there's another meaning in my laughter. You see that Eight Rules's left but he'll not go to patrol the mountain, nor will he dare to face the monsters. He'll go instead somewhere to hide for a while and then come back to deceive us with some story that he has made up."

"How do you know that about him?" asked the elder. Pilgrim replied, "I suspect that's how he will behave. If you don't believe me, let me follow him and find out. I can also lend him some assistance in subduing the monsters, and see at the same time whether he is earnest in seeking a god."

"Fine! Fine! Fine!" said the elder, "but you must not play tricks on him."

Pilgrim agreed and ran up the slope of the mountain. Shaking his body once, he changed into a tiny mole cricket, indeed a delicate and lightsome transformation. See *thin wings exercise in the wind without effort; a small waist sharp as a pin. He darts through rushes and the floral shades faster than even a comet. Eyes that are shining bright; a voice that's soft and faint. Of insects he's one of the smallest: slender, shapely, and sly. A few times he rests idle in the secluded woods – his whole body out of sight, lost to 1000 eyes.*<sup>10</sup>Spreading his wings, he flew with a buzz up there, caught up with 8 Rules, and alighted on his neck beneath the bristles behind his ear. Idiot was intent on travelling; *how'd I know that someone had landed on my body?* After walking for seven or eight miles, he dropped his muckrake, turned around, and faced the direction of the Tang Monk. Gesturing vehemently with hands and feet, he began to let loose a string of abuses. "You doddering old priest!" he said. "You unscrupulous Ban-Horse-Plague! You sissy Sand-monk! All of you're enjoying yourselves but you trick Old bull into stumping the road. All of us seeking the scriptures hope to attain the right fruit but you've to make me do this so-called patrolling the mountain. Ha, ha, ha! If there're monsters known to be in this place, we'd have taken cover and tried to get by undetected. But that's not sufficient for you; you've to make me go find them instead! Well, that's your bad luck! I'm going to find some place and take a nap. When I'm through sleeping, I'll go back and give you a vague story about having patrolled the mountain, and that will be that!"

It was the good fortune of the moment for Idiot. As he walked further along, carrying his muckrake, he discovered a clump of red grass in the fold of the mountain. He crawled inside at once and used his muckrake to create for himself some sort of floor mat. Lying down and stretching himself, he said, "O joy! Even that Ban-Horse-Plague isn't as comfortable as I'm now!" But Pilgrim had stationed himself behind his ear, heard every word. No longer able to contain himself, Pilgrim flew up and decided to badger him a little. With one shake of his body he changed again into a small woodpecker. See *a fine bill iron hard and glossy red and bright, gleaming patterned plumage. Owning a pair of steel claws sharp as nails, famished he fears not quiet woods. He loves best the dried trunks worm-rotted; he cares, too, for the lonely old tree. Round-eyed, fan-tailed, he's very perky – his pecking sounds are worth hearing!*<sup>11</sup>

This creature was neither too big nor too small, weighing perhaps only several ounces. Armed with a red bronze-hard bill and black iron claws, he hurtled straight down from the air. 8 Rules was just sleeping soundly with head upturned when his horn received a terrific bite. So startled was Idiot that he scampered up at once, madly shouting, "A monster! A monster! He stabbed me with the lance! Oh, my mouth is sore!" He rubbed it with his hands and blood spurted out. "That's weird!" he said, "I'm not involved in any happy event. Why has my mouth been painted red?" He stared at his bloody hands, muttering to himself confusedly but he could not detect the least trace of movement around him. He said, "There's no monster. Then why was I stabbed by a lance?" He raised his head to look upward and suddenly discovered a small woodpecker flying in the air. Gritting his teeth, Idiot shouted, "You wretched outcast! Isn't it enough that Ban-Horse-Plague should oppress me? Why must you, too, oppress me? Ah, I know! He must not have recognised that I'm a human, thinking instead that my horn is a charred, rotted tree trunk with worms inside. He's looking for worms to eat and that's why he gives me a bite. Let me hide my horn in my chest."

Tumbling on the ground, Idiot again lay down to sleep. Pilgrim flew down once more and gave the base of his ear another bite. Alarmed, Idiot jumped up, saying, "This wretched outcast! He's really harassing me! This must be where his nest is located, and he's worried that I've taken his eggs or offspring. That's why he's harassing me. All right! All right! All right! I'm not going to sleep anymore." Poling his rake, he left the red grass meadow and started up the road again. Meanwhile, Pilgrim Sun nearly broke up with amusement, the Handsome Monkey King almost collapsed with laughter.

"This coolie!" he said. "Even those wide open eyes couldn't recognise one of his own!"

Dear Great Sage! Shaking his body and changing again into a mole cricket, he attached himself firmly to Idiot's ear once more. After walking four or five miles deep into the mountain, Idiot came upon in a valley three square slabs of green rock, each about the size of a table. Putting down his rake, Idiot saluted deeply to the rocks. Laughing silently to himself, Pilgrim said, "This Idiot! The rocks are no humans; they know neither how to talk nor how to return his greeting. Why salute them? That's truly blind homage!" But Idiot pretended that the rocks were the Tang Monk, Sand-monk, and Pilgrim. Facing the three of them, Idiot was rehearsing what he would say. Said he, "This time when I go back to see Master, I'll say that there are monsters, should they ask me. And if they ask me what kind of mountain this is, I'll say that it's moulded of clay, made of mud, wrought of tin, forged by copper, steamed with flour, plastered with paper, and painted with the brush. If they claim that I'm speaking idiotic words, I'm going to say some more. I'll say that this is a rocky mountain. If they ask me what sort of a cave there is, I'll say there is a rocky cave. If they ask me what kind of doors there are, I'll say there are sheet-iron doors studded with nails. If they ask me how deep the cave inside is, I'll say that there are some three sections in the dwelling. If they persist in trying to learn everything, such as how many nails there are on the door, I'll only say that Old bull is too preoccupied to remember the exact number. Well, now that I've everything all made up, I'm going to go back to hoodwink that Ban-Horse-Plague." Having fabricated his story, Idiot dragged his rake along to retrace his steps. He did not know however, that Pilgrim heard everything behind his ear. When Pilgrim saw him turning back, he stretched his wings and flew back first, changing back to his original form to see his master. "Wukong, so you've come back," said the master. "Why don't we see Aware of Ability also?"

"He's just making up some lies," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "He'll be here soon."

The elder said, "A person like him who has his eyes covered by his ears has to be a stupid fellow. What sort of lies can he make up? It's got to be some hum-buggery of yours again, trying to put the blame on him."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "you're always covering up his faults. What I've to tell you however, is based on evidence." He thereupon gave a complete account of how Idiot crawled into the clump of grass to sleep and was bitten by the woodpecker, and how he saluted to the rocks and made up the story on monster-spirits in the rocky mountain, in the rocky cave with the sheet-iron doors. After he finished, Idiot came walking back in a little while. As he was afraid that he might forget what he had made up, he was still rehearsing with head saluted when Pilgrim shouted at him, "Idiot, what are you reciting?" Sticking up his ears so that he could glance around, 8 Rules said, "I'm back at the old homestead!" He went forward and knelt down but the elder raised him up, saying, "Disciple, you must be tired!"

"Yes," said 8 Rules, "the person who walks or climbs mountains is the one most tired."

"Are there any monsters?" asked the elder. 8 Rules said, "Yes, yes! There is a whole bunch of them!"

"How did they treat you?" asked the elder.

8 Rules said, "They called me Ancestor Ox and Grandpa Ox; they also prepared some vegetarian food and soup noodles for me to eat, saying that they'd put on a big parade to take us across this mountain."

"Could this be your talking in your dreams, after you've fallen asleep in the grass?" asked Pilgrim.

When Idiot heard the question, he was so astounded that he almost lost 2 inches of his height, saying, "O Dad! How could he know about my sleeping?"

Pilgrim went forward and caught hold of him, saying, "You come over here! Let me ask you!" Idiot became even more alarmed; trembling all over, he said, "You can ask me anything. Why do you've to grab me like that?"

"What kind of a mountain is there?" asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, "It's a rocky mountain."

"What kind of a cave?"

"It's a rocky cave," he said. "What kind of doors are there?" Pilgrim asked. "There are sheet-iron doors studded with nails," he said. "How deep is the cave inside?"

"There're three sections inside," he said. "Need for you to say no more," said Pilgrim. "I can remember the last part quite clearly but because I fear that Master still won't believe me, I'll say that for you."

"You sneak!" said 8 Rules. "You didn't even go with me! What do you know that you can say for me?"

"How many nails are there on the doors?" said Pilgrim, laughing. "Just say that Old bull is too preoccupied to remember clearly. Isn't that about right?"

Idiot was so frightened that he fell on his knees at once. Pilgrim said, "You saluted to the rocks and began speaking to them as if they were the three of us. Isn't that right? You also said, 'Let me make up this story so that I can go hoodwink that Ban-Horse-Plague.' Isn't that right also?"

"Elder Brother," said Idiot, respecting unceasingly, "could it be that you accompanied me when I went to patrol the mountain?"

"You overstuffied coolie!" scolded Pilgrim. "This is an important area. We asked you to go patrol the mountain, and you went to sleep instead. If the woodpecker hadn't jabbed you up, you'd still be sleeping there. After you're roused, you even made up such a big lie. You'd completely ruin our important enterprise, couldn't you? Stick out your shanks at once, and you'll receive five strokes of the rod as a keepsake."

Horried, 8 Rules said, "That funeral staff is very heavy: a little touch and my skin will collapse, a little brush and my tendons will snap. Five strokes mean certain death for me."

Pilgrim said, "If you're afraid of being beaten, why do you lie?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "it's just this once. I'll never dare do that again."

"All right," said Pilgrim, "I'll give you just three strokes this time."

"O Dad!" said 8 Rules. "I can't even bear half a stroke!" Without any alternative, Idiot caught hold of the master and said, "You must speak for me."

The elder said, "When Wukong told me that you're making up this lie, I'd not believe him. Now that it is really so, you certainly deserve to be beaten. But we're trying to cross this mountain at the moment, and we need everyone we can use. So Wukong, you may as well spare him now. Let's cross the mountain first, and then you can beat him." Pilgrim said, "The ancients said, 'To obey the

sentiments of one’s parents is to perform a great filial act.” If Master tells me not to beat you, I’ll spare you for the moment. You must go to patrol the mountain again. If you start lying and botch things up once more, I’ll not spare you from even one stroke!”

Idiot had no choice but to scamper up and leave on the main road. Look at him! As he walked along this time, he was haunted by suspicion, supposing with every step of the way that the transformed Pilgrim was following him. As soon as he came upon an object or thing, he would immediately suspect that it was Pilgrim. After he had gone for about 7 or 8 miles, he saw a tiger running across the slope. Undaunted, he lifted up his muckrake and said, “Elder Brother, did you come again to listen to my fibs? I told you I’d do that no more.” As he walked further, a violent mountain gust toppled a dead tree that rolled up to him. Pounding his chest and stamping his feet, he cried, “Elder Brother! Why did you do this? I told you I’d try no more to deceive you. Why did you’ve to change into a tree to strike at me?” He proceeded still further and saw in the air a white-necked old crow that squawked several times overhead. He said again, “Elder Brother, aren’t you ashamed of yourself? I told you I’d lie no more. Why did you still change into an old crow? Are you trying to eavesdrop on me again?”

But this time Pilgrim did not follow him; he was simply ridden with suspicion and surmise. The mountain was named Level-Top Mountain in which there was a cave called the Lotus-Flower Cave. There were 2 fiends in the cave: 1 had the name of the Great King Golden Horn and the other, the Great King Silver Horn. As they sat in the cave that day, Golden Horn said to Silver Horn, “Brother, how long’s it been since we patrolled the mountain?”

Silver Horn said, “It’s been half a month.”

“Brother,” said Golden Horn, “go and patrol it today.”

Silver Horn said, “Why today?”

“You don’t know what I heard recently,” said Golden Horn, “that the Tang emperor in the Land of the East had sent his royal brother, the Tang Monk to worship God in the West. He’s three other companions by the names of Pilgrim Sun, Bullseye Eight Rules, and Sand-monk; including the horse, there’re five of them altogether. Go see where they are and capture them for me.”

Silver Horn said, “If we want to eat people, we can catch a few anywhere. Where can these monks be? Let them pass.”

Golden Horn said, “You don’t know about this. The year when I left the Heavenly Region, I heard people say that the Tang Monk’s the disciple of the Elder Gold Cicada, a man who’s practiced religion for ten existences, and one who has not allowed any of his yang energy to be dissipated. If anyone can have a taste of his flesh, his age will be vastly lengthened.”

“If eating his flesh,” said Silver Horn, “can lengthen our age and prolong our lives, what need we to practice sedentary meditation, to arrive at certain attainment, to cultivate the dragon and the tiger, or to achieve the union of the male and the female?<sup>12</sup> We’d just eat him. Let me go and catch him at once.”

Golden Horn said, “Brother, you’re rather impulsive. Let’s not hurry. If you walk out this door and grab any monk that comes along, you’d be breaking the law unnecessarily if he were not the Tang Monk. I still recall how the real Tang Monk looks. Let’s have portraits made of the master and his disciples that you can take along with you. When you see some monks, you can check whether they are the real ones.” He thereupon had portraits drawn up, and the name of each person was written beside the picture. Taking the sketches with him, Silver Horn left the cave after calling up thirty little fiends to follow him to patrol the mountain.

We now tell you about 8 Rules whose fortune was about to take a turn for the worse. As he walked along, he ran right into the various demons who barred his way and asked, “Who is he that’s approaching?” Raising his head and pushing his ears aside, Idiot saw that they were demons and he became quite frightened. He said to himself, “If I say that I’m a monk going to seek scriptures, they may want to seize me. I’d better say I’m only a traveller.” The little fiends reported back to their master, saying, “Great King, it’s a traveller.” Among those thirty little fiends, there were some who did not recognise 8 Rules. There were a few however who found his face somewhat familiar, and pointing at him, they said, “Great King, this monk looks like the portrait of Bullseye 8 Rules.” The old fiend told them at once to hang up the picture so that they could examine it more closely. When 8 Rules saw it, he was greatly shaken, muttering to himself, “No wonder I feel somewhat dispirited of late! They have caught my spirit in this portrait!” As the little fiends held up the picture with their spears, Silver Horn pointed with his hand, saying, “This one riding the white horse is the Tang Monk, and this one with a hairy face is Pilgrim Sun.”

Hearing this, 8 Rules said, “City Guardian, it’s all right if I’m excluded! I’ll present you with three bull’s heads, twenty-four portions of pure libation...”

Mumbling to himself repeatedly, he kept making all sorts of vows. The fiend, meanwhile, went on to say, “That long dark one is Sand-monk, and this one having a long horn and huge ears is Bullseye 8 Rules.” When Idiot heard what he said, he was so startled that he lowered his horn toward his chest and tried to conceal it. “Monk, stick out your mouth,” cried the fiend. “It’s a birth defect,” said 8 Rules. “I can’t stick it out.” The fiend told the imps to pull it out with hooks, and 8 Rules became so alarmed that he stuck out his horn at once, saying, “It’s no more than a homely feature! Here it is! If you want to look at it, just look. Why do you want to use hooks?”

Recognising that it was 8 Rules, the fiend took out his precious blade and hacked away. Idiot parried the blow with his rake, saying, “My child, don’t be brazen! Watch my rake!” The fiend said with a chuckle, “This man became a monk in the middle of life.”

“Dear child!” said 8 Rules. “You do have some intelligence! How do you know right away that your dad became a monk in the middle of life?”

“If you know how to use the rake,” said the fiend, “you must’ve stolen it after hoeing the fields or gardens of some household.”

8 Rules said, “My child, you’ll not recognise the rake of your dad for it’s like no ordinary rake for hoeing the ground. We’ve here *huge teeth made in the shape of dragon claws, adorned with gold and like a tiger formed. When used in battle it draws down cold wind; when brought to combat it emits bright flames. It can for Tang Monk all barriers remove, catch all monsters on this road to the West. When it’s wielded, mists hide the sun and moon; when it’s held high, clouds make dim the pole stars. It knocks down Mount Tai and tigers panic; it overturns oceans and dragons cower. Though you, monster, may have many skills, one rake will nine bloody holes produce!*” The fiend heard the words but he was not ready to step aside. Wielding his sword of seven stars, <sup>13</sup>he charged 8 Rules and they closed in repeatedly in the mountain. Even after some 20 rounds, neither appeared to be the stronger one. Growing more and fiercer, 8 Rules began to fight as if he had no regard whatever for his life. When the fiend saw how his opponent flapped his huge ears and spat out saliva whooping and yelling all the time, he became somewhat frightened. He therefore turned around to call up all his little fiends to do battle. Now if it were a one-to-one combat, it would have been manageable for 8 Rules. But when he saw all those little fiends approaching, he panicked and turned to flee. The road however, was not very smooth and he immediately tripped over some vines and dried creepers along the way. As he was struggling to run, one of the little fiends made a flying tackle at his legs, and he hit the ground headfirst like a dog eating shit! The others swarmed all over him, pressing him on the ground, pulling at his mane and his ears, grabbing his legs, and tugging at his tail. They hoisted him up bodily to return to the cave. Alas! Thus it is that a *whole body bursting with demons is hard to destroy; 10000 ills arise, they are tough to remove.*

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Heresy deludes the True Nature; Primal Spirit helps the Native Mind

That fiend who hauled 8 Rules into the cave, crying, “Elder Brother, we caught one!” Delighted, the old demon said, “Bring him here for a look.”

“Isn’t this the one?” said the 2<sup>nd</sup> demon. “Brother,” said the old demon, “you caught the wrong one. This monk’s useless.”

8 Rules at once jumped at this opportunity and said, “Great King, please release a useless monk and let him go. It’s a crime!”

“Elder Brother,” said the second demon, “don’t release him. Even if he’s useless, he is part of the Tang Monk’s company, and he’s called Bullseye 8 Rules. Let’s soak him thoroughly in the pure water pool in the back; when the bristles are plucked and the hide is peeled after the soaking, we can pickle him with salt and sun him dry. He’ll be a good appetizer with juice on a cloudy day.”

When 8 Rules heard these words, he said, “What rotten luck! I’ve met up with a monster who traffics in pickled food!”

The little fiends hauled 8 Rules inside and threw him into the water. Tripitaka was sitting before the slope; his ears became flushed and his heart began to pound. Growing very restless, he called out, “Wukong, why’s it that Aware of Ability has taken so long to patrol the mountain this time and hasn’t returned?”

Pilgrim said, “Master still doesn’t know anything of how his mind works!”

“How does it work?” asked Tripitaka.

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “if this mountain truly has monsters, he will find it difficult to advance even half a step. Instead, he will run back to report to us with all sorts of exaggerations. I suppose however, that there are no monsters, and he must have gone ahead directly when he found the road quiet and safe.”

“If he’s really gone ahead,” said Tripitaka, “where’ll we meet him? This a wild, mountainous region unlike somewhere in a village or town.”

Pilgrim said, “Don’t worry, Master, please mount up. That Idiot’s rather lazy and without doubt he moves very slowly. Urge your horse a little and we’ll certainly catch up with him to proceed together again.”

The Tang Monk indeed climbed on his horse; as Sand-monk poled the luggage, Pilgrim led the way in front to ascend the mountain. The old fiend said to the 2<sup>nd</sup> demon, “Brother, if you’ve caught 8 Rules, there must also be the Tang Monk somewhere. Go and patrol the mountain again and make certain that you don’t miss him.”

“At once! At once!” said the second demon who immediately called up some fifty little fiends to go patrol the mountain with him. As they journeyed, they saw auspicious clouds and luminous ether circling. The second demon said, “Here comes the Tang Monk!”

“Where is he?” asked the various little fiends. The second demon said, “Auspicious clouds will alight on the head of a virtuous man whereas the black ether emitted from the head of a wicked man will rise up to the sky. That Tang Monk is actually the disciple of the Elder Gold Cicada, a virtuous man who has practiced austerities for ten existences. That’s why he is encircled by these auspicious clouds.” Those little fiends however, still could not perceive where the monk was. Pointing with his finger, the second demon said, “Isn’t that he?” Immediately, Tripitaka on the horse shuddered violently; the demon pointed again, and Tripitaka shuddered once more. This went on for three times, and Tripitaka grew very anxious, saying, “Disciples, why am I shuddering like this?”

“You must have an upset stomach,” said Sand-monk, “and that’s why you’re feeling the chill.”

“Nonsense!” said Pilgrim. “Going through this Tall Mountain and rugged cliff must have made Master rather apprehensive, that’s all. Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid! Let old monkey put on a show for you with my rod to calm your fears somewhat.” Dear Pilgrim! Whipping out his rod, he began to go through a sequence of manoeuvres with the rod as he walked before the horse: up and down, left and right, the thrusts and parries were made in perfect accord with the manuals of martial arts. What the elder saw from the horse was a sight incomparable anywhere in the world!

As Pilgrim led the way toward the West, the monster who was watching on top of the mountain, almost fell over with fear. Scared out of his wits, the monster blurted out, “I’ve heard about Pilgrim Sun for several years but today I know that this is no false rumour.” Drawing closer to him, the various fiends said, “Great King, why do you ‘magnify the determination of others to diminish your own authority’? Of whom are you boasting?”

“Pilgrim Sun,” said the second demon, “truly possesses vast magical powers. We’ll be unable to eat the Tang Monk.”

“Great King,” said the fiends, “if you don’t have the abilities, let a few of us go and report to the Great, Great King. Ask him to call up all the fighters, young and old, of our cave, and we’ll all join to form a solid battle front. You fear that he’ll be able to escape then?”

“Can’t you all see that iron rod of his?” asked the second demon. “It’s powerful enough to vanquish ten thousand foes. We’ve but four or five hundred soldiers in the cave, and they’ll be unable to take even a single stroke of his rod!”

The fiends said, “If you put it that way, the Tang Monk certainly will not be our food. Doesn’t that mean that we’ve also made a mistake in seizing Bullseye 8 Rules? Let’s return him to the monks.”

“We’ve not quite made a mistake,” said the second demon, “nor should we send him back so easily. In the end, we’re determined to devour the Tang Monk but we can’t do it just yet.”

“If you put it that way,” said the fiends, “should we wait for a few more years?”

The 2<sup>nd</sup> demon said, “No need for a few more years. I perceive now that that Tang Monk must be sought for with virtue and not be taken by violence. If we want to use force to catch him, we’ll be unable to get even a whiff of him. The only way we can move him is to feign virtue so that his mind will be made to fuse with our minds in the process of which we’ll plot against him, exploiting the very virtue of his.”

The fiends said, “If the Great King wants to devise a plan to catch him, will you want to use us?”

“Each of you may return to our camp,” said the 2<sup>nd</sup> demon, “but you’re not permitted to report this to the Great King. If you disturb him and leak the news, my plan may be ruined. I’ve my own power of transformation and can catch him.”

The various monsters dispersed; the demon by himself leaped down from the mountain. Shaking his body by the road, he changed into an aged Daoist. He was dressed in a *shining star-patterned cap, tousled whitish hair; feathered gown wrapped in silk sash, sandals tied with yellow coir, nice features and bright eyes like a man divine, a light, healthy body as the Age Star’s. Why speak of the Blue Buffalo Daoist? He’s as strong as White Tablet Master? – a specious form disguised as the true form, falsehood feigning to be the honest truth!* By the side of the main road, he masqueraded himself as a Daoist with a bloody, broken leg, whimpering constantly and crying, “Save me! Save me!”

We’re telling you about Tripitaka who, relying on the strength of Great Sage Sun and Sand-monk, was proceeding happily when they heard repeatedly the cry, “Master, save me!” When this reached the ears of Tripitaka, he said, “My goodness! My goodness! There is all around not a single village in the wilderness of this mountain. Who could it be that’s calling? It must be, I suppose, someone

terrified by the tiger or the leopard." Reining in his fine horse, the elder called out, "Who is the person facing this ordeal? Please show yourself." The fiend crawled out of the bushes and at once banged his head on the ground without ceasing, facing the elder's horse. When Tripitaka saw that it was a Daoist, and an elderly one at that, he felt sorry for him. Dismounting at once, he tried to take hold of him with his hands, saying, "Please get up! Please get up!" The fiend said, "It hurts! It hurts!" When Tripitaka released his hold, he discovered that the man's leg was bleeding. "O Master," said the startled Tripitaka, "where did you come from? How is it that your leg is wounded?"

With clever speech and specious tongue, the fiend answered falsely, saying, "Master, west of this mountain is a clean and secluded temple, of which I'm a Daoist." Tripitaka said, "Why are you not tending the incense and fires or rehearsing the scriptures and the rituals in the temple? Why are you walking around here?"

"A patron at the southern part of this mountain," said the demon, "invited the Daoists to pray to the stars and distribute the blessings day before yesterday. Last night my disciple and I were walking home when we ran into a ferocious striped tiger in a deep canyon. It seized my disciple and dragged him away in its mouth while your terrified Daoist, madly attempting to flee, broke his leg when he fell on a pile of rocks. I'd not even find my way back. But it must be a great Heavenly affinity that caused me to meet Master today, and I beseech you in your great compassion to save my life. When I get to our temple, I'll repay your profound kindness even if it means selling myself into slavery!"

When Tripitaka heard these words, he thought they were the truth and said to him, "O Master, we two belong to the same calling – I'm a monk and you're a Daoist. Though our attire may differ, the principles in cultivation, in the practice of austerities, are the same. If I don't save you, I'd not be ranked among those who have left the family. But though I intend to save you, I see that you can't walk."

"I can't even stand up," said the fiend, "so how can I walk?"

"All right, all right!" said Tripitaka. "I can still walk. I'll let you take my horse for this distance. When you get to your temple, you can return the horse to me." The fiend said, "Master, I'm grateful for your profound kindness but my inner thigh is hurt. I can't ride." Triptitaka said, "I see," and he said to Sand-monk, "Put the luggage on my horse, and you carry him."

"I'll carry him," said Sand-monk.

Stealing a quick glance at Sand-monk, the fiend said, "O Master, I was so terrified by that ferocious tiger. Now that I see this priest with such a gloomy complexion, I'm even more frightened. I dare not let him carry me."

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, "you carry him then." Pilgrim immediately answered, "I'll carry him. I'll carry him." Having made certain that it was Pilgrim who would carry him, the monster became very amiable and did not speak anymore. "You cockeyed old Daoist!" said Sand-monk, laughing. "You don't think it's good for me to carry you, and you want him instead. When he is out of Master's sight, he'll smash even your tendons on a sharp, pointed rock!"

Pilgrim, meanwhile, had agreed to put the monster on his back but he said, chuckling, "You brazen demon, how dare you come to provoke me! You'd have made some inquiry on how many years old monkey has been around! Your fib can deceive the Tang Monk but do you really think you'd fool me? I can tell that you're a fiend of this mountain who wants to eat my master, I suppose. But is my master an ordinary person, someone for you to eat? And even if you want to devour him, you'd at least have given a larger half to old monkey!"

When the demon heard Pilgrim muttering like this, he said, "Master, I'm the descendant of a good family who has become a Daoist. It's my misfortune this day to have met this adversity of the tiger. I'm no monster."

"If you fear the tiger and the wolf," said Pilgrim, "why don't you recite the Scripture of the Northern Dipper?"<sup>3</sup> When Tripitaka heard these words just as he was mounting, he chided, "This wanton ape! 'Saving one life is better than erecting a seven-tiered pagoda.' Isn't it enough that you carry him? Why speak of the Classic of the Northern Dipper or the Classic of the Southern Dipper?"

When Pilgrim heard him, he said, "Lucky for this fellow! My master happens to be someone who is inclined toward compassion and virtue but also someone who prefers external appearance more than inward excellence. If I don't carry you, he'll blame me, so I'll carry you, all right. But I've to make it clear to you: if you want to piss or shit, tell me first. For if you pour it down my back, I can't take the stink, and there is no one around to wash and starch my clothes when they are soiled."

"Look at my age," said the fiend, "you think I don't understand what you said?" Only then did Pilgrim pull him up and put him on his back before setting out on the main road to the West with the elder and Sand-monk. When they reached a spot in the mountain where the road became bumpy, weaving up and down, Pilgrim took care to walk more slowly, allowing the Tang Monk to proceed first. Before they had gone four or five miles, the master and Sand-monk descended into a fold of the mountain and became completely out of sight. More and more annoyed, Pilgrim thought to himself, "Master is such a fool even though he's a grown man! Travelling this great distance, one gets weary even if one were empty-handed – and he tells me instead to carry this monster! I wish I'd throw him off! Let's not say he's a monster; even if he were a good man, he should die without regret for having lived so long. I might as well dash him to the ground and kill him. Why carry him any further?"

As the Great Sage was about to do this, the monster knew instantly of his plan. Knowing how to summon mountains, he resorted to the magic of Moving Mountains and Pouring out Oceans. On Pilgrim's back he made the magic sign with his fingers and recited a spell, sending the Sumeru Mountain into mid-air and causing it to descend directly on Pilgrim's head. A little startled, the Great Sage bent his head to one side and the mountain landed on his left shoulder. Laughing, he said, "My child, what sort of press-body magic are you using to pin down old monkey? This is all right but a lopsided pole is rather difficult to carry."

The demon said to himself, "One mountain can't hold him down." He recited a spell once more and summoned the Emei Mountain<sup>4</sup> into the air. Pilgrim again turned his head and the mountain landed on his right shoulder. Look at him! Carrying two mountains, he began to give chase to his master with the speed of a meteor! The sight of him caused the old demon to perspire all over, muttering to himself, "He truly knows how to pole mountains!"

Exerting his spirit even more, he recited another spell and sent up the Tai Mountain to press down on Pilgrim's head. With this magic of the Tai Mountain Pressing the Head, the Great Sage was overpowered as his strength ebbed and his tendons turned numb; the weight was so great that the spirits of the Three Worms<sup>5</sup> inside his body exploded and blood spouted from his seven apertures.<sup>6</sup>

Dear monster! After he used his magic power to pin down Pilgrim, he himself mounted quickly a gust of violent wind to catch up with the Tang Monk. From the edge of the clouds, he stretched down his hand to try to seize the rider of the horse. Sand-monk was so startled that he threw away the luggage and whipped out his fiend-routing staff to block the attempt. *Wielding the sword of the 7 stars, the demon met him head on and it was some battle! The sword of 7 stars, the fiend-routing staff, all flashed golden beams as lightning bright. This one, eyes glowering, seemed the black god of death; that one, iron-faced, was the true Curtain-Raising Captain. The fiend before the mountain showed his power, solely bent on catching Tripitaka Tang. This man earnestly guarding the true monk, would not let go even at the threat of death. The two belched fog and cloud to reach Heaven's Palace; they sprayed dirt and dust to cover the stars. They fought till the red sun grew dim and lost its light – the great earth, the cosmos, turned dusky all. Back and forth they scuffled for eight, 9 rounds: it was quick defeat for which Sand-monk was bound!* The demon was exceedingly ferocious; the thrusts and slashes of his sword fell on his opponent like meteor showers. Growing weaker by the moment, Sand-monk could no longer withstand him and turned to flee, when the precious staff was forced aside and he was seized by a huge hand. Wedging Sand-monk beneath his left arm, the demon dragged Tripitaka off the horse with his right hand; with the tip of his feet hooked on to the luggage and his mouth tugging at the mane of the horse, he used the magic of removal and brought them all to the Lotus-Flower Cave in a gust of wind. Shouting at the top of his voice, he cried, "Elder Brother, all the monks are caught and brought here!"

When the old demon heard these words, he was very pleased, saying, "Bring them here for me to have a look."

"Aren't these the ones?" asked the second demon. "Worthy brother," said the old demon, "you caught the wrong ones again."

"But you told me to catch the Tang Monk," said the second demon. The old demon said, "It was the Tang Monk, all right but you didn't manage to catch the able Pilgrim Sun. We've to catch him first before we can enjoy eating the Tang Monk. If we've not caught him, be sure not to touch any of his companions. That Monkey King has vast magic powers and knows many ways of transformation. If we devour his master, you think he'll accept that? He will certainly come to quarrel with us at our door and we'll never be able to live in peace."

"Elder Brother," said the second demon with a laugh, "you know only how to exalt others! According to your words, that monkey is unique on Earth, and rare even in Heaven. But as I see him, he's so-so only with not many abilities."

"You caught him, then?" asked the old demon. "He has already been pinned down by three large mountains that I summoned," said the second demon, "and he can't move even an inch. That's how I managed to transport the Tang Monk, Sand-monk, the white horse, and even the luggage back here." When the old demon heard these words, he was filled with delight, saying, "What luck! What luck! Only after we've caught this fellow can the Tang Monk be food in our mouths." He thereupon said to the little fiends, "Prepare some juice at once. Let's present to our Second Great King the goblet of merit." The second demon said, "Elder Brother, let's not drink juice yet. Let's order the little ones to scoop Bullseye 8 Rules out of the water and hang him up." 8 Rules was thus hung up in the east side of the cave, Sand-monk in the west side, and the Tang Monk in the middle. The white horse was placed in a stable while the luggage was brought inside the cave.

Smiling, the old demon said, "Worthy Brother, what marvellous ability! You went out twice and you caught three monks. Though Pilgrim Sun however, has been pressed beneath the mountains, we must find a way to bring him here so that he can be steamed together with the others."

The 2<sup>nd</sup> demon said, "If Elder Brother wants to bring Pilgrim Sun here, there's no need for us to move. Please take a seat. We need only order two little monsters to put him in two treasures of ours and bring him here."

"Which treasures should they take along with them?" asked the old demon.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> demon said, "Take my red gourd of purple gold and your pure mutton-jade vase."

Bringing out the treasures, the old demon said, "Whom we'd send?"

The 2<sup>nd</sup> demon said, "Let's send Sly Devil and Wily Worm, the two of them." He then gave the instructions to the 2 saying, "Take these treasures and go to the tallest peak of the three mountains. Turn one of them upside down so that its mouth will face the ground and its bottom, the sky. Call out the name, *Pilgrim Sun* and if he answers, he'll be sucked immediately inside. You'll then seal the container with the tape bearing the words, 'May Laozi act quickly according to this command.'<sup>7</sup> He'll be reduced to pus in seventy-five minutes."

The 2 little fiends respected before they left to fetch Pilgrim. The Great Sage was pressed beneath the mountains by the magic of the demon. *Suffering, he thought of Tripitaka; in adversity, he recalled the holy monk.* He cried out with a loud voice, "O Master! I remember how you went to the Mountain of Two Frontiers to lift up the tape that'd me pressed down and it's then that old monkey escaped his great ordeal to embrace the vow of complete poverty. Thanks to the Nun, I was given the religion decree so that you and I'd stay together and practice religion together so that we'd be brought under the same affinity and attain the same enlightenment and knowledge. How'd I expect that we'd run into such a demonic obstacle here and I'd be pinned down again by his mountains. O pity it all! You may be fated to die but pity Sand-monk, 8 Rules, and the little dragon who took all that trouble of changing into a horse. Truly as the saying goes, *a tall tree beckons the wind, the wind will rock the tree; a man lives for his name, his name will wreck the man.*"

When he finished this lamentation, tears rained down his cheeks. All that noise however, immediately disturbed the mountain god, the local spirit, and the Guardians of 5 Quarters who came together with the Golden-Headed Guardian. The last 1 said, "Whose mountains are these?"

"Ours," said the local spirit. "Do you know who it's that you've pinned down beneath the mountains?"

"No, we don't," said the local spirit.

"So, you don't know," said the Guardian, "but he happens to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, the Pilgrim Sun Wukong who caused tremendous disturbance in Heaven five centuries ago. Now he has embraced the right fruit to follow the Tang Monk as his disciple. How could you permit the demon to borrow these mountains to pin him down? You're as good as dead! If he ever finds release and comes out, you think he'll spare you? Even if he lets you all go lightly, the local spirit will be demoted to an attendant in a posthouse, the mountain god will be banished to military service, and even we'll be placed under a terrible obligation." Only then did the mountain god and the local spirit become frightened; they said, "We really didn't know. All we heard was the spell for moving mountains recited by the demon and we transferred the mountains here. How could we know that it was the Great Sage Sun?"

The Guardian said, "Don't be afraid now. The Law says, 'The ignorant will not be held culpable.' You and I can discuss the matter and see how we can release him without making him beat us."

"This is becoming rather ridiculous," said the local spirit. "Will he beat us even after we've released him?"

"You've no idea," said the Guardian, "that he possesses a compliant golden-hooped rod, a most powerful weapon indeed. One stroke of it means death; one touch, a bad wound! A small tap and the tendons snap, a tiny brush and the skin collapses!"

Growing more and more alarmed, the mountain god and the local spirit had a discussion with the Guardians of Five Quarters before walking up to the front of the three mountains and crying, "Great Sage, the mountain god, the local spirit, and the Guardians of Five Quarters have come to see you." Dear Pilgrim! Though he might be like a lean tiger at the moment, his prowess remained. When he heard the announcement, he replied at once resolutely in a ringing voice, "Why do you want to see me?" The local spirit said, "Allow me to report this to the Great Sage. I ask your permission to move the mountains away so that the Great Sage might come out and pardon the crime of disrespect unknowingly committed by this humble deity." Pilgrim said, "Move the mountains away. I'll not hit you." When he said this, it was as if an official pardon had been announced! The various gods began reciting their spells and the mountains were sent back to their original locations.

Once released, Pilgrim leaped up; shaking off the dirt and tightening up his skirt, he whipped out his rod from behind his ear and said to the mountain god and the local spirit. "Stick out your shanks. Each of you'll receive two strokes so that old monkey may find some relief for his misery!"

Terrified, the 2 gods said, "Just now the Great Sage promised to pardon us. How could you change your word, now that you've come out, and want to hit us?"

"Dear local spirit! Dear mountain god!" said Pilgrim. "You're not afraid of old monkey, you're afraid of the monsters instead!" The local spirit said, "Those demons have vast magical powers. With their incantations and spells, they would summon us into their cave and we'd have to take turns to be on duty."

When Pilgrim heard these two words "on duty," he, too, was quite shaken. Lifting his head to face the sky, he cried in a loud voice, "O Azure Heaven! Since the division of chaos and the creation of Heaven and Earth, and since the Flower-Fruit Mountain gave birth to me, I did search all around for the enlightened teacher to transmit to me the secret formula for longevity. Think of it, I can change with the wind, tame the tiger, and subdue the dragon; I even caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace and acquired the name Great Sage. But I never dared to be so insolent as to order a mountain god or a local spirit around. These demons today are truly lawless! How could they be so arrogant as to make the mountain god and the local spirit their servants, forcing them to take turns to be on duty? O Heaven, if you had given birth to old monkey, why did you give birth to these creatures also?"<sup>8</sup>

As the Great Sage was thus sighing, he saw in the distance beams of light rising from a mountain valley. "Mountain god, local spirit," said Pilgrim, "since you've been on duty in the cave, you must know what objects are those emitting the light."

"They must be the luminescent treasures of the demons," said the local spirit. "Some monster spirits, I suppose, are coming with the treasures to subdue you." Pilgrim said, "This is a lot more fun! Let me ask you quickly who would socialize with them in the cave?" The local spirit said, "Those they love are persons who heat the cinnabar and refine the herbs; those whom they delight in are the Quanzhen Daoists."

"No wonder he changed into an old Daoist to lure my master away," said Pilgrim. "Since this is the case, your beating will be deferred for the moment. You may leave, let old monkey himself catch them."

The various deities rose into the air and left. This Great Sage shook his body once and changed into an old adept. He was dressed as such: *his head had 2 buns of hair; wore a clerical robe; his hand struck a bamboo fish; 9a Master Lü<sup>10</sup> sash circled his waist. Reclining by the main road, he waited for the little fiends. In a while the fiends arrived; the Ape King released his tricks.* In no time at all, the two little fiends came before him and Pilgrim stuck out his golden-hooped rod. Unprepared for this, one of the little fiends tripped on it and fell; only when he scrambled up did he see Pilgrim. "Villainy! Villainy!" he began to cry. "If our Great Kings didn't have a special fondness for your kind of people, I'd scrap with you."

"What's there to scrap about?" said Pilgrim, smiling amiably. "A Daoist meeting a Daoist, we're all in the same family!"

"Why did you lie here," said the fiend, "and cause me to stumble?" Pilgrim said, "A Daoist youth like you, when you run into an aged Daoist like me, must take a fall – it's a sort of substitute for presenting an introductory gift." The fiend said, "Our Great Kings only demand a few ounces of silver as introductory gifts. Why do you insist on someone taking a fall? This must be the custom of another region, and you can't possibly be a Daoist from around here."

"Indeed, I'm not," said Pilgrim, "for I came from Penglai Mountain."

The fiend said, "But Penglai is an island in the territory of mortals."

"If I'm not a mortal," said Pilgrim, "who's a mortal?"

Turning all at once from anger to delight, the fiend approached him and said, "Old Mortal, Old Mortal! We're of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, and that's why we can't recognise you. Our words have offended you. Please pardon us."

"I'll not blame you," said Pilgrim, "for as the saying goes, 'The mortal frame does not tread on ground profane.' How could you know? The reason why I've landed on your mountain today is that I want to enlighten a good man to become a mortal, to understand the Dao. Which of you is willing to follow me?" Sly Devil said, "Master, I'll follow you," while Wily Worm also said, "Master, I'll follow you."

Though he knew the reason already, Pilgrim nonetheless asked, "Where did you two come from?"

"From the Lotus-Flower Cave," said one of the fiends.

"Where are you going?"

"Our Great Kings have ordered us," said the fiend, "to go capture Pilgrim Sun."

"To capture whom?" asked Pilgrim. "To capture Pilgrim Sun," said the fiend again. Pilgrim said, "Could it be Pilgrim Sun, the one who's following the Tang Monk to seek scriptures?"

"Exactly, exactly," said the fiend. "You know him too?"

"That monkey is rather rude," said Pilgrim. "I know him all right, and I'm a little mad at him. I'll go with you to capture him; we'll consider this my assisting you in making merit."

"Master," said the fiend, "no need for you to assist us in making merit. Our Second Great King has considerable magic powers: he summoned three huge mountains and had that monkey pinned down, unable to move even an inch. He then told us to come with treasures to store him up."

"What kind of treasures?" asked Pilgrim. Sly Devil said, "Mine is a red gourd while his is a pure jade vase."

"How do you plan to store him up?" asked Pilgrim. The little fiend replied, "Turn my treasure upside down so that its mouth will face the earth and its bottom the sky. I'll then call him once, and if he answers me, he will at once be sucked inside. I'll then seal the treasure with a tape bearing the words, 'May Laozi Act Quickly According to This Command.' In one and three-quarter hours, he will be reduced to pus."

When Pilgrim heard that, he said to himself in secret alarm, "Formidable! Formidable! Previously the Day Sentinel said that they had five treasures, and these must be two of them. I wonder what sort of things are the other three?" He smiled and said to the two of them, "Could you two permit me to have a look at the treasures?" Completely unsuspecting, the little fiends took out from their sleeves at once the two treasures and presented them to Pilgrim with two hands. When Pilgrim saw them, he was delighted, saying to himself, "Marvellous things! Marvellous things! I'd wag my tail once and leap clear of this place, making off with the treasures as if they had been presented to me as gifts." He then thought to himself, "It's no good! I can rob them of these things but old monkey's reputation will be ruined. This is nothing but committing robbery in broad daylight." He therefore returned the treasures to the fiends, saying, "You've not seen my treasure yet." One of the fiends said, "What kind of treasure does Master have? Would you permit us profane people to have a look, to ward off calamities, perhaps?"

Dear Pilgrim! Stretching forth his hand, he pulled off a piece of hair from his tail and gave it a squeeze, crying "Change!" It changed at once into a huge red gourd of purple gold, about seventeen inches tall. He took it out from his waist, saying, "You want to see my gourd?" Having received it in his hands and examined it, Wily Worm said, "Master, your gourd is big, and it has nice form. It's good to look at all right but I'm afraid that it's not good to use."

"What do you mean by not well to use?" asked Pilgrim. The fiend said, "Each one of our treasures can store up to a thousand people."

"So," said Pilgrim, "yours can store up people. What's so rare about that? This gourd of mine can even store up Heaven!"

"It can?" said the fiend. "Indeed," said Pilgrim. "I'm afraid you're lying," said the fiend. "Store it up for us to see and we'll believe you; otherwise, we'll never believe you."

"If Heaven irritates me," said Pilgrim, "I usually store it up seven or eight times within a single month. If it doesn't bother me, I'll not store it up for as long as half a year."

"Elder Brother," said Wily Worm, "a treasure that can store up Heaven! Let's exchange ours with his." Sly Devil said, "How would he be willing to exchange his with ours that can only store up people?"

"If he's unwilling," said Wily Worm, "we'll make it good with our vase also."

Secretly delighted, Pilgrim thought to himself: *A gourd repays a gourd, we add a vase of jade. Two things exchanged for one: that's what I call fair trade!*

He therefore went forward and caught hold of Wily Worm, saying, "If I store up Heaven, you'll trade with me?"

"If you do, yes," said the fiend. "If I don't, I'll be your son!"

"All right! All right!" said Pilgrim. "I'll store it up for you to see."

Dear Great Sage! Saluting his head and making the magic sign, he recited a spell that brought him a god of Day Patrol, a god of Night Patrol, and the Guardians of Five Quarters, to whom he gave the following instruction: "Report for me at once to the Jade Emperor and say that old monkey has embraced the right fruit to accompany the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. Our path has been blocked at a tall mountain where my master encounters grievous calamity. I'd like to entice certain demons who possess some treasures, into trading with me. I therefore beseech His Majesty with due reverence to let old monkey borrow Heaven to be stored up for half an hour so that I may accomplish my task. If he but utters half a 'No,' I'll ascend to the Divine Mists Hall and start a war!"

The deities went past the South Heaven Gate and stood below the Hall of Divine Mists to report to the Jade Emperor. "This impudent ape!" said the Jade Emperor. "He still speaks in such an unruly manner. Some time ago when Guanyin came to inform us that he had been released to accompany the Tang Monk, we even sent him the Guardians of the Five Quarters and the Four Sentinels to take turns ministering to him. Now he even wants to borrow Heaven to be stored up! How could Heaven be stored up?" Hardly had he finished speaking when the Third Prince Nata stepped forward from the ranks and memorialised, saying, "Your Majesty, Heaven, too, can be stored up."

"How?" inquired the Jade Emperor.

Nata said, "When Chaos first divided, that which was pure and light became Heaven, and that which was heavy and turbid became Earth. Heaven, then, is a round mass of clear ether that nonetheless supports the Jasper Palace and the Heavenly ramparts. In principle, therefore, Heaven cannot be stored up. However, the matter of Pilgrim Sun's accompaniment of the Tang Monk journeying westward to acquire scriptures is itself a source of blessings great as Mount Tai and deep as the sea. Today we'd help him to succeed."

The Jade Emperor said, "How would our worthy minister help him?"

"Let Your Majesty issue a decree," said Nata, "and ask Zhenwu, the Lord of the North at the North Heaven Gate, to lend us his banner of black feathers that should then be unfurled across the South Heaven Gate. The sun, the moon, and the stars will be covered, and it will be so dark on Earth that people cannot see each other even if they are standing face to face. The fiends will be deceived into thinking that Heaven has been stored up, and that is how we may help Pilgrim to succeed." The Jade Emperor gave his consent to this suggestion, and the prince received the command to go to the North Heaven Gate where he gave the account to Zhenwu. The patriarch at once handed the banner to the prince.

Meanwhile, the Day Patrol God swiftly returned to the Great Sage and whispered in his ear, "Prince Nata has come to help you." Looking up, Pilgrim saw auspicious clouds looming up: indeed a deity was approaching. He turned to the little fiends, saying, "I'm going to store up Heaven."

"Go ahead," said one of them. "Why keep dragging your feet?"

"I was just exercising my spirit and reciting a spell," said Pilgrim. The 2 little fiends stood there wide-eyed and determined to find out how he was going to store up Heaven. Pilgrim gave the specious gourd a mighty heave and tossed it up into the air. Think of it: that gourd was changed from a piece of hair. *How heavy it'd be?*

Lifted up by the mountain wind, it drifted here and there for at least 30 minutes before dropping down. Meanwhile Prince Nata at the South Heaven Gate flung wide the black banner and in 1 instant covered the sun, the moon, and all the planets. Truly *the cosmos seemed dyed by ink, the world was made indigo.* Astounded, the little fiends said, "It's just about noon when we're talking. How's it that it's dusk already?"

"Heaven has been stored up," said Pilgrim. "You can't tell time! How can it not be dusk?"

"Why is it so dark?" they cried. Pilgrim said, "The sun, the moon, and the stars are all contained inside. There's no light outside. How can it not be dark?"

"Master," said one of the little fiends, "where are you speaking?"

"Am I not in front of you?" asked Pilgrim. The little fiend stretched out his hand to try to touch him, saying, "I can hear you but I can't see your face. Master where are we?" To deceive them further, Pilgrim said, "Don't move. This is the shore of the Gulf of Zhili. If you stumble and fall into the sea, you'll not reach bottom even after seven or eight days."

"Stop! Stop! Stop!" cried the horrified fiends. "Release Heaven, please! We know now how it is stored up. If we fool around anymore and drop into the sea, we'll not get home."

Dear Pilgrim! When he saw that they took the whole thing for the truth, he recited the spell again to alert the prince who rolled up the banner and the sunlight of noon was seen once more. "Marvellous! Marvellous!" cried the little fiends, laughing. "Such fantastic treasure, if we don't exchange for it, we're certainly no better than bastards!" Sly Devil at once took out the gourd and Wily Worm the pure vase; both of them then handed the treasures to Pilgrim. In return, Pilgrim gave them the specious gourd. After the exchange, Pilgrim wanted to make certain that the bargain stuck. Pulling off a piece of hair from beneath his belly, he blew on it and it changed into a copper penny. "Young man," he said, "take this penny and buy us a piece of paper."

"What for?" asked the little fiend. "So that I can draw up a contract with you," said Pilgrim. "The two of you used your human-storing treasures to exchange with me a single piece of Heaven-storing treasure. I fear that you may not consider that quite fair and that after a few years you'll come to regret our deal. That's why I want a contract for all of us."

"We don't even have brush or ink around here," said one of the fiends. "Why bother about writing a document? Let's exchange vows instead."

"What kind of vow?" asked Pilgrim. The two little fiends said, "We gave two human-storing treasures to you in exchange for one Heaven-storing treasure. If we ever regret our decision, may we be stricken with plague in all four seasons."



"I'll never regret mine," said Pilgrim, smiling. "If I do, may I also be stricken like you." After he made this vow, he leaped up and with one wag of his tail arrived before the South Heaven Gate where he thanked Prince Naṭa for unfurling the banner and lending him assistance. The prince then went back to the palace to report to the Jade Emperor and to return the flag to Zhenwu. Pilgrim meanwhile stood in the air and looked at those little fiends.

**The demon king’s plotting entraps Mind Monkey; the Great Sage ever adroit, wangles the treasures**

Those 2 little fiends who took the specious gourd in their hands and, for some time, fought to examine it. Raising their heads, they suddenly discovered that Pilgrim had vanished. “Elder Brother,” said Wily Worm, “even a mortal would lie. He said that after we’d exchanged our treasures he’d enlighten us to become mortals. Why did he leave without even telling us?”

Sly Devil said, “When you tally up the score, we’re the ones who have by far the greater gain. Why worry about his leaving? Give me the gourd. Let me store up Heaven just for practice!” He indeed tossed the gourd up into the air but it plopped down again immediately. “Why doesn’t it work?” asked a startled Wily Worm. “Could it be that Pilgrim Sun had changed into a false mortal and used a specious gourd to trade off our real one?”

“Don’t talk nonsense!” said Sly Devil. “Pilgrim Sun is pinned down by those three mountains. How could he come out? Give it to me again. Let me recite those few words of the spell he said and see if it will store up Heaven.” Again the fiend tossed the gourd up into the air, crying, “If there is but half a ‘No,’ we’ll ascend to the Divine Mists Hall and start a war.” Before he had even finished saying that, the thing plopped down again. “It doesn’t work! It doesn’t work!” shrieked the little fiends. “It’s got to be a fake!”

As they were clamouring like this, the Great Sage Sun saw and heard everything in mid-air. Fearing that they might learn the truth if they played with the thing too long, he shook his body and retrieved the piece of hair that had been changed into the gourd. The 2 fiends were left with four empty hands. “Brother,” said Sly Devil, “give me the gourd.”

“You’re holding it,” said Wily Worm. “My God! How come it disappeared?” They searched madly on the ground and in the bushes; they stuck their hands into their sleeves and slapped their waists. But there was nothing to be found. Stupefied, the two fiends mumbled, “What shall we do? What shall we do? The Great King at the time gave us the treasures and told us to capture Pilgrim Sun. Not only have we not caught Pilgrim Sun but we’ve even lost the treasures now. How dare we go back to give our report? We’ll simply be beaten to death. What shall we do? What shall we do?”

After a while, Wily Worm said, “We’d better go.” “Where?” asked Sly Devil. “Never mind where,” said Wily Worm. “If we go back and say that we’ve no treasures, we’ll lose our lives for sure.” Sly Devil said, “Don’t run away, let’s go back instead. The Second Great King is ordinarily quite good to you; I’ll put a little blame on you. If he is in the mood to be somewhat lenient, our lives may be spared; if not, we’ll at least be beaten to death at home but we’ll not be left dangling here. Let’s go. Let’s go. Let’s go.” After they had discussed the matter, the fiends began their walk back to their mountain.

When Pilgrim in mid-air saw them leaving, he shook his body again and changed into a fly to follow them. If he changed into a fly, you might ask where did he put those treasures? If he left them by the road, or even if he hid them in the grass, people could pick them up if they saw them, and all his efforts would have been in vain. No, he had to take them with him, carrying the treasures on his body. But a fly is no bigger than the size of a pea. How could he carry them? The treasures were just like his golden-hooped rod; they were also called compliant God-treasures. They would transform according to the size of the body: they could become large or small, and that was why even a tiny body like a fly could hold them. With a buzz, Pilgrim thus flew down and steadfastly followed the fiends till in no time they reached the cave.

The two head demons were sitting there and drinking juice when the little fiends faced them and knelt down. Pilgrim alighted on the door frame and listened. “Great Kings,” said the little fiends. “Have you returned?” said the second demon, putting down his cup. “Yes,” said the little fiends. “Have you caught Pilgrim Sun?” he asked again. The little fiends began to respect, not daring to make a sound. The old demon asked again but they did not dare reply; all they did was to respect. Questioned repeatedly, they finally saluted themselves on the ground and said, “Please pardon your little ones for the crime of ten thousand deaths! Please pardon your little ones for the crime of ten thousand deaths! When we took the treasures and reached the middle of the mountain, we ran into a mortal from Penglai Mountain. He inquired where we’re going and we told him that we’re going to catch Pilgrim Sun. When the mortal heard this, he said that he, too, was mad at Pilgrim Sun and wanted to give us assistance. We told him that there was no need for his assistance and explained how our treasures could store up humans. That mortal also had a gourd most capable of storing up Heaven. Moved by vain hopes and illicit desires, we thought we’d exchange our treasures that could only store up people with his that could store up Heaven. Originally, we wanted to exchange gourd for gourd but Wily Worm decided to make good the deal by adding the pure vase. We’d no idea that his mortal object could not be touched by the hands of the profane. Just as we’re experimenting with it, it disappeared completely with the man, too. We beseech you to pardon our mortal offence.”

When the old demon heard this, he was so aroused that he bellowed thunderously, “Undone! Undone! This has to be Pilgrim Sun who masqueraded himself as a mortal to dupe them. That ape has great magic powers and vast acquaintances. I don’t know which clumsy deity has let him out, and he has wangled our treasures.”

The second demon said, “Don’t be so angry, Elder Brother. I didn’t expect that ape head to be so insolent. If he has the ability, he can escape and that’s all right. Why did he have to wangle our treasures? If I don’t catch him, I’ll never be a monster on this road to the West!”

“How will you catch him?” asked the old demon. The second demon said, “We’ve five treasures; two are gone but we still have three others. We must make certain that Pilgrim Sun will be caught by one of these.”

“Which three do we’ve now?” asked the old demon. “I still have with me the sword of the seven stars and the palm-leaf fan,” said the second demon, “but the yellow-gold rope’s kept at the Crush-Dragon Cave of the Crush-Dragon Mountain, the place of our aged mum. We’d now send two little fiends to invite mum to come to dine on the Tang Monk’s flesh, and tell her at the same time to bring that yellow-gold rope to capture Pilgrim Sun.”

The old demon said, “Whom should we send?” “Not these useless creatures,” said the second demon and then he shouted to them, “Get up!” “Lucky! Lucky!” said the 2 of them. “We’re neither beaten nor scolded. We’re let go just like that!”

The demon said, “Ask Hill-Pawing Tiger and Sea-Lolling Dragon who often accompany me to come here.” The two little fiends arrived and knelt down. “You must be careful,” instructed the second demon. “We’ll be careful,” they replied. “You two must be cautious.”

“Yes, we’ll be cautious,” they replied. “Do you know where the Old Madam’s home is?” asked the second demon again. “Yes, we do,” they replied. “If you do, get there quickly, and when you reach her house, inform her reverently that she is invited to come here to dine on the flesh of the Tang Monk. Tell her also to bring along the yellow-gold rope in order that we may catch Pilgrim Sun.”

The 2 little fiends obeyed and raced out of the cave; they did not know that Pilgrim on one side had heard everything clearly. Stretching his wings, he flew out of the cave, caught up with Hill-Pawing Tiger, and landed on his body. After they had gone for 2 or 3 miles, he was about to slay them when he thought to himself, “To kill them is hardly difficult but that Old Madam of theirs has the yellow-gold rope and I don’t know where she lives. Let me question them a bit first before I slaughter them.” Dear Pilgrim! He darted away with a buzz and allowed the little fiends to walk ahead for about 100 steps. Then with one shake of his body he also changed into a little monster wearing a fox-skin cap and a tiger-skin kilt hitched up to the waist. Running up to them, he said, “You on the road, wait for me.”

Turning around, Sea-Lolling Dragon asked, “Where did you come from?” “Dear Brother,” said Pilgrim, “you can’t even recognise someone from the same clan?”

“You’re not in our clan,” said the little fiend. “What do you mean?” said Pilgrim. “Take another look.”

“You don’t look familiar at all,” said the little fiend. “We’ve not met before.” “Indeed,” said Pilgrim, “you’ve never seen me. I belong to the external division.” The little fiend said, “I’ve not met any officer from the external division at all. Where are you going?” Pilgrim said, “The Great King told you two to invite Old Madam to dine on the flesh of the Tang Monk as well as to bring along the yellow-gold rope to capture Pilgrim Sun. But he fears that the two of you’d not walk fast enough, and your love of play would delay this important enterprise. That’s why he sent me along also to tell you to hurry.” When the little fiends saw that his words went straight to the bottom of the truth, they did not suspect anything, thinking instead that Pilgrim indeed was a member of the same clan. Hurriedly, they sprinted forward for eight or nine miles.

“We’ve run too fast,” said Pilgrim. “How far have we gone since we left home?”

“About sixteen miles,” said the little fiend. Pilgrim said, “How much farther do we’ve to go?” Pointing with his finger, Sea-Lolling Dragon said, “Inside the dark forest up ahead – that’s it.” Pilgrim raised his head and saw a large dark forest not far away, and he figured that the old fiend had to be within that vicinity. He stood still, allowing the other two little fiends to proceed; then he caught up with them and gave them a swiping blow with the iron rod. Alas, they were no match for the rod at all and were reduced instantly to two meat patties! Pilgrim picked them up and hid them inside some bushes by the road. Pulling off a piece of hair, he blew on it a magic breath, crying “Change!” It changed at once into Hill-Pawing Tiger while he himself changed into Sea-Lolling Dragon. The 2 specious monsters then proceeded directly to the Dragon-Crushing Cave to invite the old madam. This is what we call *72 transformations – what magic might! Ever adroit with things – such great ability!* With four, five leaps, he bounded right into the forest. As he was looking around, he saw two stone doors half-closed nearby. Not daring to enter abruptly, he had to call out, “Open the door.” A female monster standing guard inside opened wide the door and asked, “Where did you come from?”

Pilgrim said, “I came from the Lotus-Flower Cave of the Level-Top Mountain with an invitation for Old Madam.”

“Inside,” said the female monster. When Pilgrim reached the second door, he stuck his head inside to take a look and found an old woman sitting squarely in the middle. She looked as such: *snow-white hair all tousled and star-like eyes all aglow. Her face though ruddy has many wrinkles; she’s full of spirit though few teeth remain; charming – like the frosted chrysanthemum; rugged – like an old pine tree after rain. A scarf of fine-spun white silk wraps her head and bejewelled gold rings hang from her ears.* After he had seen her, the Great Sage Sun did not go inside at once. Instead, he remained crestfallen outside the 2<sup>nd</sup> door and began to weep silently. *Could it be that he was afraid of her?* Even if he were, he would hardly weep. Moreover, he was courageous enough to have bilked the monsters of their treasures and slain the little fiends. *Why then did he weep?* In times past, he could have entered a giant tripod of boiling oil, and even if he had been fried for seven or eight days, he would not have shed half a tear. It was however, the thought of the misery inflicted on him on account of the Tang Monk’s going to acquire scriptures that moved him to tears. He thought to himself, “If old monkey had displayed his ability and changed into a little fiend to invite this aged monster, there’d be absolutely no reason for him to speak standing up. I must respect when I see her! A hero all my life, I’ve only respected to three persons: I saluted to God of the Western Heaven, Guanyin of the South Sea, and four times to Master when he saved me at the Mountain of Two Frontiers. For him I’ve used up even my innards and my bowels! Ah, how much could a roll of scripture be worth? Yet, I’m forced to salute myself before this fiend today. If I don’t, I’ll be discovered for sure. O misery! In the last analysis, Master’s in sad straits and that’s why I’ve to bear such humiliation.” When he came to that point in his thoughts, he had no choice but to race inside and kneel down, facing her. “Madam,” he said, “please receive my respect.”

The fiend said, “My child, stand up.” “Fine! Fine! Fine!” said Pilgrim to himself. “That’s an honest address!”

“Where did you come from?” asked the old fiend. “From the Lotus-Flower Cave of the Level-Top Mountain,” said Pilgrim. “I received the order of the two Great Kings to invite Madam to go and dine on the flesh of the Tang Monk. You’ve also been requested to bring along the yellow-gold rope to catch Pilgrim Sun.” Exceedingly pleased, the old fiend said, “What filial sons!” She at once called for her sedan chair. “O my child!” said Pilgrim to himself. “Even monsters ride in sedan chairs!” From behind, two female monsters carried out a sedan chair made of fragrant rattan, on which they hung curtains of blue silk. The old fiend walked out of the cave and sat in the chair, followed by several little female monsters carrying toilet boxes, mounted mirrors, towels, and a perfume box. “Why did you all have to come out?” asked the old fiend. “I’m going to my own home, and you think that there will be no one there to serve me? We don’t need your big mouths there. Go back! Shut the doors and look after the house!” Those few little monsters indeed went back, and only two remained to pole the sedan chair. “What are the names of those two who have been sent here?” asked the old fiend. “He’s called Hill-Pawing Tiger,” said Pilgrim quickly, “and my name is Sea-Lolling Dragon.” The old fiend said, “Walk in front, the two of you. Shout and clear the way for me.”

“This had to be my misfortune!” thought Pilgrim. “We’ve not yet acquired the scriptures but I’ve to be her slave at this moment!” He did not dare refuse; walking ahead, he shouted to clear the way. After they had gone for five or six miles, he sat down on a slab of stone to wait for the two carrying the sedan chair. When they arrived, Pilgrim said, “How about resting a while? Your shoulders must be getting sore.” The little fiends did not suspect anything, of course, and they put down the sedan chair. Walking behind it, Pilgrim pulled off a piece of hair from his chest and changed it into a huge biscuit that he held and began to munch on. “Officer,” said one of the chair carriers, “what are you eating?”

“I’m embarrassed to tell you,” said Pilgrim, “but we’ve walked all this distance to invite Old Madam, and she didn’t give us any reward. I’m getting hungry, and that’s why I’m eating some of our own dried goods before we move again.”

“Please give us some, too,” said the carriers. Pilgrim said, “Come on. We all belong to the same family. Why do you ask?” Not knowing any better, the little fiends both surrounded Pilgrim to divide the dried food. Whipping out his iron rod, Pilgrim gave their heads a terrific blow: the one hit directly was reduced at once to pulp while the other who was swiped by the rod did not die immediately and

was still moaning. When the old fiend heard someone moan and stuck her head out to look, Pilgrim leaped before the sedan chair and slammed the rod down on her head. Brains burst out and blood spurted in every direction from the gaping hole. Pilgrim dragged her from the sedan chair and discovered that she was a nine-tailed fox.<sup>1</sup> “Cursed beast!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “Who are you that you’d be called Old Madam? If you’re addressed as Old Madam, you’d call old monkey as your great, grand ancestor!” Dear Monkey King! He searched and found the yellow-gold rope that he stuffed into his own sleeve, saying happily, “Those lawless demons may be powerful but three treasures now belong to him whose name is Sun.” He yanked off two pieces of hair (which he changed into Hill-Pawing Tiger and Sea-Lolling Dragon), and two more (which he changed into the fiends who carried the sedan chair). He himself changed into the form of the old woman and sat in the sedan chair. They then started out on the main road once more.

In a little while, they reached the entrance of the Lotus-Flower Cave. Those little fiends which were changed from the hairs cried out in front, “Open the door! Open the door!” The little fiends inside who were guarding the door opened it and said, “Hill-Pawing Tiger and Sea-Lolling Dragon, have you two returned?”

“Yes,” said the pieces of hair. “Where’s Old Madam whom you’re to invite?”

“Isn’t she there inside the sedan chair?” said the pieces of hair, pointing. “Stay here,” said one of the little fiends. “Let me go and report.”

When the 2 head-demons heard the announcement, “Great King, Old Madam’s arrived,” they gave the order at once that an incense table be prepared to receive her.

When Pilgrim heard this, he was delighted, saying to himself, “What luck! Now it’s my turn to be someone! When I first changed into a little fiend to go invite that old monster, I respected to her once. But now that I’ve changed into the old monster who is supposed to be their mum, they must perform the ceremony of four salutes. It may not be much but I’m reaping the profit of two heads respecting to me!” *Dear Great Sage!*

He descended from the sedan chair and shaking off the dirt from his clothes, retrieved the four pieces of hair onto his body. The little fiends who stood guard at the door carried the empty sedan chair inside, and he followed them slowly from behind, mincing all the while to imitate the gait of the old fiend. When they went inside, the entire flock of monsters, old and young, all came to receive him, as drums and flutes were played harmoniously and curls of fragrant smoke rose from the Boshan urn.<sup>2</sup> He arrived at the main hall and sat down, facing south; <sup>3</sup>the 2 head-demons knelt before him and respected, saying, “Mum, your children are saluting.”

“My sons,” said Pilgrim, “please rise.”

Bullseye 8 Rules hanging there on the beam, suddenly let out a guffaw. “Second Brother,” said Sand-monk, “this is quite marvellous! They hang you till you laugh out loud!”

“Brother,” said 8 Rules, “I’ve a reason for laughing.”

Sand-monk asked, “What reason?”

“We’re afraid,” said 8 Rules, “that when Madam arrived, we’d be steamed and eaten. Now I see that it’s not Madam; it’s the dear old thing.”

“What dear old thing?” asked Sand-monk.

“Ban-Horse-Plague’s here,” said 8 Rules, chuckling.

Sand-monk said, “How could you recognise him?”

“When he bent his back to return their greetings, saying, ‘My sons, please rise,’” said 8 Rules, “that monkey tail of his flipped up from behind. I’m hung higher than you, and that’s why I can see more clearly.”

Sand-monk said, “Let’s not talk, let’s hear what he has to say.”

“Exactly, exactly,” said 8 Rules.

Sitting in the middle, the Great Sage Sun asked, “My sons, why did you invite me here?”

“Dear Mum,” said one of the demons, “for days your children have not had the opportunity to fulfil our filial responsibilities. This morning we managed to catch the Tang Monk from the Land of the East but we dared not eat him all by ourselves. We therefore invited Mum to come so that he might be presented live to you, and then he will be steamed as your food to prolong your life.”

“My sons,” said Pilgrim, “I’m not at all keen to dine on the Tang Monk’s flesh but I hear that the ears of one Bullseye 8 Rules are quite marvellous. Why don’t you cut them down and fix them up as appetizers for my *juice*?” Startled by what he heard, 8 Rules said, “Plague on you! Did you come here to cut down my ears? If I announce aloud who you’re, it won’t sound very good!”

Alas! This one careless statement of Idiot at once unmasked the transformation of the Monkey King. Just then, a few little fiends who went to patrol the mountain and a few others who stood guard at the door all rushed in also, saying, “Great King, disaster! Pilgrim Sun has beaten to death Old Madam, and he disguised himself to come here.” When the head demon heard these words, he did not wait for any further report; pulling out his sword of seven stars, he slashed at the face of Pilgrim. Dear Great Sage! He shook his body once, and brilliant red light filled the cave as he made his escape. Such abilities made the whole episode fun and games for him. For truly he had mastered this secret: coming together he took on form but dispersing he became ether. So shaken were the inhabitants of the cave that the old demon’s spirit left him, and the various monsters bit their fingers and shook their heads.

“Brother,” said the old demon, “take the Tang Monk, Sand-monk, 8 Rules, the white horse, and the luggage – take them all and return them to Pilgrim Sun. Let’s shut the door on conflict.”

“What are you saying, Elder Brother?” said the second demon. “You’ve no idea how much effort I spent in devising this plan to bring back all those monks. And now intimidated by Pilgrim Sun’s trickery you want to return them to him unconditionally. You’ve become in fact a person who fears the knife and shuns the sword. Is that manliness? Sit down and don’t be afraid. I heard you say that Pilgrim Sun had vast magic powers; though I met him, I’ve yet to wage a contest with him. Bring me my armour. Let me fight three rounds with him: if he can’t defeat me in those three rounds, the Tang Monk is still our food. If I can’t prevail against him in those three rounds, there’s still time then for us to return the Tang Monk to him.” The old demon said, “You’re right, Worthy Brother.” He ordered at once for the armour to be brought out.

After the various fiends hauled out his armour, the second demon suited up himself properly and walked out the door, holding the treasure sword. “Pilgrim Sun,” he cried, “where have you gone to?” At the time the Great Sage had already reached the edge of the clouds. When he heard his name called, he turned quickly and saw that it was the second demon. He was dressed in a *phoenix helmet whiter than snow and an armour made of bright Persian steel. The belt on his waist is dragon’s tendon. Plum-flower shaped gaiters top his goat-skin boots. He seems the living Lord of Libation Stream; <sup>4</sup> looks no different from Mighty Spirit. <sup>5</sup>He holds in his hands the sword of 7 stars, stern and imposing in a towering rage.* “Pilgrim Sun,” cried the 2<sup>nd</sup> demon, “give us back quickly our mum and treasures. I’ll let you and the Tang Monk go to acquire scriptures.”

Unable to contain himself any longer, the Great Sage roared, “This impudent monster! You’ve made a mistake in thinking that your Grandpa Sun will let you go so easily! Return at once my master, my younger brothers, the white horse, our luggage, and give us moreover some travel money for us to take on our road to the West. If half a *no* leaks through your teeth, you might as well hang yourself with rope. That’ll save your Grandpa from having to raise his hands.” When the second demon heard these words, he leaped up to the clouds swiftly and stabbed with the sword. Pilgrim met him face to face with the uplifted iron rod, and it was some battle between the 2 of them in mid-air. *The chess master finding his match, the general meeting a good warrior – finding his match the chess master can’t suppress his joy; meeting a good warrior the general must apply himself. When those 2 divine fighters come together, they seem like tigers brawling on South Mountain or dragons striving in North Sea. As dragons strive, their scales sparkle; when tigers brawl, teeth and claws strike madly. Teeth and claws strike madly like silver hooks and sparkling scales upturn like iron leaves. This 1 overall uses 1000 ways to attack; that 1 back and forth does not let up for half a moment. The golden-hooped rod is only 3/10s of an inch from the head. The 7-stars sword poised at the heart, needs only 1 thrust. The imposing air of this 1 chills the Great Dipper; the angry breaths of that 1 menace like thunder.* The 2 of them fought for 30 rounds but no decision was reached. Secretly delighted, Pilgrim said to himself, “This lawless monster manages to withstand the iron rod of old monkey. But I’ve already acquired three of his treasures. If I continue to fight bitterly like this with him, won’t it just delay what I want to do? Perhaps I’d use the gourd or the pure vase to store him up.” He then thought further, “No good! No good! The proverb says, *Each thing’s its master*. If I call him and he doesn’t answer, it’ll just defeat my purpose. Let me use the yellow-gold rope to lasso his head.” *Dear Great Sage!*

He used 1 hand to wield his iron rod while his other hand whipped out the rope and lassoeed the demon’s head. The demon however, knew Tight-Rope and Loose-Rope Spells. If the rope had bound another person, he would recite the Tight-Rope Spell and that person would be unable to escape. But if the rope had been fastened on 1 of his own, he would recite the Loose-Rope Spell and no harm would come to the person. When he saw, then, that it was his own treasure, he recited at once the Loose-Rope Spell; the rope loosened itself and he came out of the noose. Taking the rope, he threw it at Pilgrim instead and it caught hold of the Great Sage instantly. The Great Sage was about to exercise his magic of thinning the body when the demon recited the Tight-Rope Spell and it had him firmly bound. It was impossible for him to escape, for when the rope was drawn down to his neck, one end of it changed into a gold ring tightly enclosing him. The fiend then gave the rope a tug and pulled Pilgrim down before he gave that bald head seven or eight blows with the sword. The skin on Pilgrim’s head did not even redder at all. “This monkey’s,” said the demon, “quite a hard head! I’ll hack at you no more. Let me take you back to the cave first before I hit you again. But you’d better return my other two treasures right now.”

“What treasures I’ve taken from you,” asked Pilgrim, “that you’d ask me for them?”

The demon searched Pilgrim carefully and found both the gourd and the vase. Using the rope as a leash, he brought Pilgrim back to the cave, saying, “Elder brother, I’ve caught him.”

The old demon said, “Whom did you catch?”

“Pilgrim Sun!” said the second demon. “Come and look! Come and look!”

The old demon took one look and recognised that it was indeed Pilgrim. He smiled happily and said, “It’s he! It’s he! Tie him up with a long rope to the pillar just for fun.”

They indeed had Pilgrim tied to a pillar, after which the two demons went to the hall in the back to drink. As the Great Sage was crawling around beneath the pillar, he was seen by 8 Rules. Hanging on the beam, Idiot laughed loudly, saying, “Elder Brother, you can’t quite manage to eat my ears!”

“Idiot,” said Pilgrim, “are you comfortably hung up there? I’ll get out right now, and you can be certain that I’ll rescue all of you.”

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” asked 8 Rules. “You can’t even escape yourself, and you want to rescue others. O, let it be, let it be! Master and disciples might as well die together so that we’d ask for our way in the Region of Darkness.” Pilgrim said, “Stop babbling nonsense! You watch me leave here.”

“I’ll see how you leave here,” said 8 Rules. Though the Great Sage was talking to 8 Rules, his eyes were fixed on those two demons. He saw that they were drinking inside, and there were a few little fiends running madly back and forth to bring in the dishes and to pour juice. When their guard lapsed shortly and no one stood near the Great Sage, he at once exercised his divine powers. Slipping out his rod, he blew on it, saying, “Change!” and it changed instantly into a file of pure steel. Gripping the gold ring on his neck, he filed it through with four or five strokes and freed himself by pulling the ring apart. Yanking off a piece of hair, he commanded it to change into a specious form of himself tied to the pillar; his true self however, changed with one shake of the body into a little monster and stood to one side.

“Bad news! Bad news!” cried 8 Rules once more on the beam. “The one tied up is a false product. The one hanging is genuine.”

Putting down his cup, the old demon asked, “What’s that Bullseye 8 Rules yelling about?” Pilgrim who had changed into a little monster, went forward to say, “Bullseye Eight Rules is trying to persuade Pilgrim Sun to escape by transformation but Sun isn’t willing. That’s why Bullseye is hollering.”

“And we say that Bullseye 8 Rules is without guile!” said the second demon. “Now I see what a sneak he is! He should have his mouth caned twenty times.”

Pilgrim indeed went to get a cane for the beating. “You’d better hit me lightly,” said 8 Rules. “If the strokes are even slightly heavy, I’ll yell again that I recognise you.”

Pilgrim said, “It’s for the sake of all of you that old monkey’s undergone the transformation. Why did you’ve to let the truth leak out? All the monster-spirits of this cave can’t recognise me. Why does it have to be you who can recognise me?”

“Though you’ve changed your features,” said 8 Rules, “your ass hasn’t been changed! Aren’t those two patches of red still on your buttocks? That’s why I can recognise you.” Pilgrim slipped out to the kitchen and wiped some soot off the pots to blacken his buttocks before returning to the front. When 8 Rules saw him, he said, chuckling, “This monkey must’ve gone somewhere to mess around so that he has now come back with a black ass!”

Pilgrim still remained standing there for he wanted to steal their treasures. Indeed a clever person, he walked up the hall and half-knelt to the fiend, saying, “Great King, look how that Pilgrim Sun is crawling all over the pillar. The yellow-gold rope, I fear, may be ruined by all that rubbing and stretching. We’d get something thicker to tie him up.”

“You’re right,” said the old demon.

He took off a belt with a lion buckle from his own waist to hand to Pilgrim. Taking the belt, Pilgrim fastened his false form to the pillar but the rope he stuffed instantly into his own sleeve. Then he pulled off another piece of hair that with one blow of his breath he changed into a fake yellow-gold rope, and which he presented with both hands to the fiend. Eager only for his juice, the fiend did not bother to examine it before putting it away. This is what we mean by *the Great Sage, ever versatile, displays his skills: the hair is now exchanged for the golden rope*. As soon as he had acquired this treasure, he leaped out the door and changed back into his true form. “Monster!” he shouted.

A little fiend guarding the door asked, “Who’re you that you dare shout here?”

“Go in quickly,” said Pilgrim, “and report to those lawless demons that a Grimpil Sun is here.”

The little fiend indeed made the report as he was told. Highly startled, the old demon said, “We’ve caught Pilgrim Sun already! How is it that there is a Grimpil Sun?”

"Elder Brother," said the second demon, "Why fear him? The treasures are all in our hands. Let me take the gourd out and have him stored up."

"Brother," said the old demon, "do be careful."

The second demon took out the gourd and walked out the door where he encountered someone who seemed to be an exact image of Pilgrim Sun but only a little shorter. "Where did you come from?" he asked. Pilgrim said, "I'm the brother of Pilgrim Sun. When I heard that you caught my elder brother, I came to settle the score with you."

"Yes, I caught him all right," said the second demon, "and he's locked up in the cave. Now that you've arrived, you want to fight with me, I suppose but I'll not cross swords with you. Let me call your name once. Do you dare answer me?"

"Even if you call me a thousand times, I'll not be afraid," said Pilgrim. "I'll answer you ten thousand times!"

Leaping into the air with his treasure held upside down, the demon called out, "Grimpil Sun!"

Pilgrim dared not reply, thinking to himself, "If I answer him, I'll be sucked inside."

"Why don't you answer me?" said the demon.

"My ears are a little stuffed up," said Pilgrim, "and I can't hear you. Call louder." The fiend indeed shouted, "Grimpil Sun!"

Squeezing his fingers together to do some calculations down below, Pilgrim thought to himself, "My real name is Pilgrim Sun but this Grimpil Sun is a fake name that I've made up. With the real name I can be sucked inside but how could it work with a false name?" He could not refrain from answering, and instantly he was sucked into the gourd that was then sealed by the tape. That treasure had no regard for whether the name called out was true or false: if one even breathed an answer, one would be sucked inside instantly.

When the Great Sage arrived inside the gourd, he found only total darkness. He tried to push up with his head but to no avail at all, for whatever was stopping the mouth of the gourd was exceedingly tight. Growing anxious, he thought to himself, "Those two little fiends I met on the mountain at the time told me that if a man was sucked into either the gourd or the vase, he would be reduced to pus in one and three-quarter hours. Could I be dissolved like that?" He thought further to himself, "It's nothing. I can't be dissolved! When old monkey caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago and was refined for forty-nine days in the eight-trigram brazier of Laozi, the process in fact gave me a heart strong as gold and viscera hardy as silver, a bronze head and an iron back, fiery eyes and diamond pupils. How could I be reduced to pus in one and three-quarter hours? Let me follow him inside and see what he does."

The second demon went inside with the gourd, saying, "Elder Brother, I've caught him."

"Caught whom?" asked the old demon. The second demon said, "Grimpil Sun has been stored up in the gourd by me." Delighted, the old demon said, "Worthy Brother, please take a seat. Don't move the gourd. We'll shake it after a while and we'll lift the seal only if it swashes." Hearing this, Pilgrim thought to himself, "If my body remains like this, how could it swash? I've to be reduced to liquid before the gourd can swash when shaken. Let me leave some urine here; when he shakes it and it swashes, he will certainly lift up the seal and I can then beat it!" But he thought again, "No good! No good! The urine can make the noise but my shirt will be soiled. I'll wait until he shakes the gourd, and then I'll spit out a lot of saliva. All that drippy mess will deceive him into lifting the seal, and old monkey can then escape." The Great Sage made this preparation but the fiend was busy drinking and did not try to shake the gourd at all. Devising another plan to deceive them, the Great Sage suddenly cried out, "Heavens! My shanks have dissolved!" The demons did not shake the gourd, and the Great Sage cried out again, "O Mum! Even my pelvic bones are gone!"

"When his waist is gone," said the old demon, "he's almost finished. Lift up the seal and take a look."

When the Great Sage heard this, he pulled off a piece of hair, crying "Change!" It changed into half a body stuck at the bottom of the gourd while his true self was changed into a tiny insect attached to its mouth. As soon as the second demon lifted up the seal, the Great Sage flew out at once and with a roll changed instantly again into the form of Sea-Lolling Dragon, that little fiend who was sent formerly to fetch the Old Madam. He stood to one side while the old demon took hold of the gourd and peered inside. Half a body was squirming down below, and he did not wait to determine whether it was genuine or not before he shouted, "Brother, cover it up, cover it up! He hasn't been completely dissolved yet." The second demon again taped on the seal, not realising that the Great Sage on one side was snickering to himself, saying, "You don't know that old monkey is right over here!"

Taking the juice pot, the old demon poured a full cup of juice and presented it with both hands to the second demon, saying, "Worthy Brother, let me toast you with this cup." The second demon said, "Elder Brother, we've drunk juice for quite a while already. Why do you've to toast me with the cup now?"

"It's no big thing perhaps that you caught the Tang Monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk," said the old demon, "but you even managed to tie up Pilgrim Sun and store up Grimpil Sun. For making such great merit, you'd be toasted with many cups more." When the 2<sup>nd</sup> demon saw how his elder brother sought to honour him, he dared not refuse but he dared not accept the cup with 1 hand either for he was holding the gourd with the other. Quickly passing the gourd to Sea-Lolling Dragon, he then received the cup with both hands. Little did he realise, of course, that Sea-Lolling Dragon was in fact the transformed Pilgrim Sun. *Look at him!* He waited on the demons with great attentiveness. After the second demon took the juice and drank it, he wanted to return the toast. "No need to toast me," said the old demon. "Here, I'll drink a cup with you."

The 2 of them kept exchanging niceties like that for some time while Pilgrim, holding the gourd, fixed his eyes on them. When he saw them passing the juice cup back and forth without the slightest regard for what he was doing, he slipped the gourd into his sleeve and used another piece of hair to form a specious gourd exactly the same as the genuine 1. The demon took the gourd out of Pilgrim's hands without bothering to examine it after presenting juice for a while. They sat down at their tables again and continued to drink as before. Having acquired the treasure again, the Great Sage turned and left, highly delighted and saying to himself: *The gourd's still owned by the Sun family though this demon's his wizardry!*

035

***Heresy uses power to oppress the proper Nature; Mind Monkey conquers deviate demons, bagging treasures***

*His nature's perfect: thus he knows the Way. Turning, he leaps clear of the net and snare.*

*To learn transformation's no easy thing, nor is it common to achieve long life.*

*Luck changes him to things pure and impure; free of fated kalpas he moves at will.*

*For countless aeons he is fancy-free – a ray divine fixed always on the void.*

The meaning of this poem subtly corresponds to the wonders of the Dao attained by the Great Sage Sun. Since he had acquired the true treasure from that demon, he concealed it in his sleeve, saying happily to himself, "Though that lawless demon tries so hard to capture me, his efforts are no better than the attempt to fish the moon out of water. But when old monkey wants to catch him, it's as simple as melting ice over fire!" Hiding the gourd, he slipped out the door and changed back into his original form. "Monster spirits," he shouted, "open the door!" A little fiend said, "Who are you that you dare make noises here?" Pilgrim answered, "Report at once to those old lawless demons that a Sun Pilgrim has arrived."

The little fiend dashed inside to make the report, saying, "Great King, there is a so-called Sun Pilgrim showing up outside our door."

"Worthy Brother," said the old demon, deeply shaken, "that's bad! We've stirred up a whole nest of pestilence! Look! The yellow-gold rope has caught a Pilgrim Sun while the gourd has stored up a Grimpil Sun. How can it be that there is another Sun Pilgrim? It must be that they have several brothers and they have all arrived."

"Relax, Elder Brother," said the second demon. "This gourd of ours can hold up to a thousand people, and we've only one Grimpil Sun inside. Why worry about another Sun Pilgrim? Let me go out and take a look. I'll store him up also."

"Do be careful, Brother," said the old demon.

*Look at that second demon!* Holding the specious gourd, he walked out the door as resolutely and confidently as before. "Who're you," he cried, "that you dare make noises around here?"

Pilgrim said, "So, you don't recognise me! *I lived at Flower-Fruit Mountain. My home: the Water-Curtain Cave. For disturbing Heaven's Palace I ceased to strive for a long time. Lucky to be freed of my woes, I left Dao and followed a monk to reach, obedient, Thunderclap, to seek scriptures and right knowledge. When I meet wild, lawless demons, I work with my mighty magic. Return my monk of Great Tang that we go West to see God. Our conflict will then be ended and each one can enjoy his peace. Don't stir up old monkey's ire or your stale life will expire!*"

"You come over here for a moment" said the demon, "but I'm not going to fight with you. I'm about to call your name once. You dare answer me?"

"If you call me," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "I'll answer you. But if I call you, will you answer me?"

"I call you," said that fiend, "only because I've a treasure gourd which can store up people. What do you've that makes you want to call me?" Pilgrim said, "I, too, have a little gourd."

"If you do," said the fiend, "take it out for me to have a look." Pilgrim took the gourd out of his sleeve, saying, "Lawless demon, you look!" He waved it once and stuffed it immediately back into his sleeve, for he was afraid that the demon might want to snatch it away.

When the demon caught sight of the gourd, he was greatly shaken, saying, "Where did that gourd of his come from? How is it that it is exactly like mine? Even if it grew from the same branch, there ought to be some difference in size or shape. How could they be exactly alike?" With complete seriousness, he said, "Sun Pilgrim where did your gourd come from?" Pilgrim, of course, did not know the history of the gourd but he turned the question around and asked instead, "Where did yours come from?"

Not realising that it was a trick, the demon thought that it was an honest query and he proceeded to give a complete account of its origin, saying, "This gourd of mine came into existence during the time when chaos divided and Heaven and Earth were created. There was then a Supreme Primordial Old Patriarch,<sup>1</sup> who through death changed himself into Nüwa and took on her name. She melted stones in order to repair the heavens and save the mundane world. When she reached a crack in the northwest region at the base of the Kunlun Mountain, she discovered a strand of mortal creeper on which was formed this red gourd of purple gold. It is, therefore, something handed down by Laozi until now." When the Great Sage heard this story, he at once used it as a model for his own account, saying, "My gourd also came from the same spot."

"How so?" asked the demon. "Since the division of the pure and the turbid," said the Great Sage, "Heaven was incomplete at the northwest corner, and Earth was incomplete in the southeast corner. The Supreme Primordial Daoist Patriarch through death changed himself into Nüwa.<sup>2</sup> After she had repaired the heavens, she journeyed to the base of the Kunlun Mountain where there was a strand of mortal creeper on which two gourds had formed. The one I've is a male while yours is a female." The fiend said, "No need to distinguish the genders; if it can store up people, it's a good treasure."

"You're right," said the Great Sage, "I'll let you try first."

Highly pleased, the fiend leaped into the air, held up the gourd, and cried, "Sun Pilgrim!" When he heard the call, the Great Sage replied in one breath eight or nine times without stopping but nothing happened to him at all. Dropping down from the air, the demon beat his chest and stamped his feet, crying, "Heavens! And we say that only human life has not changed in the world! Even a treasure like this is afraid of her mate: when the female meets the male, it ceases to be effective!"

"Why don't you put yours away," said Pilgrim, laughing, "for it's old monkey's turn to call you." Swiftly somersaulting into the air, he turned the gourd upside down and took aim at the demon, crying, "Great King Silver Horn!" Not daring to close his mouth, the fiend made his reply, and instantly he was sucked into the gourd that was then sealed by Pilgrim with the tape bearing the words, "May Laozi Act Quickly According to This Command." Secretly pleased, Pilgrim said, "My child, you're going to try something new today!"

He descended from the cloud, holding the gourd, and headed straight for the Lotus-Flower Cave, every thought of his set on rescuing his master. The road on that mountain was pockmarked with holes, and he, moreover, was somewhat bowlegged. As he scurried along, the gourd was shaken repeatedly, and soon there came from within a loud swashing sound continuously. It swashes already as the Great Sage had a body which had been so thoroughly refined that he could not be dissolved speedily. On the other hand, the fiend might know some such paltry magic as mounting the clouds and riding the fog but he had not been completely delivered from his mortal constitution. The moment he was sucked into the treasure, he was dissolved. Pilgrim however, did not quite believe that that had been the case. "O my child," he said, laughing, "I don't know whether you're pissing or gargling! But this sort of business is most familiar to old monkey. Not until after seven or eight days, when you've become thin liquid, will I lift the cover to look. Why hurry? What's the rush? When I think of how easily I got out, I'd not spy on you for a millennium!" As he held the gourd and talked to himself like that, he soon arrived at the entrance of the cave. He gave the gourd a shake and it was swashing even more loudly. "This sounds like the rattle of a fortune-telling tube," he said. "Old monkey should make an inquiry to see when Master can come out of this door." Look at him! He shook the thing in his hand constantly while reciting, "The *Classic of Change* of King Wen, Great Sage Confucius, Master Zhou of *Lady Peach-Blossom*,<sup>3</sup> Master Ghost Valley."<sup>4</sup>

When the little fiends in the cave saw that, they cried, "Great King, disaster! Sun Pilgrim has stored up our Second Great King in the gourd and he's using that for fortune-telling now." When the old fiend heard these words, he was so horrified that his spirit left him and his soul fled, his bones weakened and his tendons turned numb. He fell on the ground and began to wail, crying, "O Worthy Brother! When you and I left the Region Above in secret and found our lives in this mortal world, our hope was to enjoy together riches and glory as permanent lords of this mountain cave. How could I know that, because of this monk, your life would be taken away and our fraternal bond be broken?" The various fiends of the entire cave all began to wail aloud.

When Bullseye 8 Rules, hanging there on the beam, heard the wailing of the whole family, he could not refrain from calling out, "Monster, don't cry! Let Old bull tell you something. The Pilgrim Sun who arrived first, the Grimpil Sun who came next, and finally the Sun Pilgrim who came last – all three of them are in fact a single person, my elder brother. He is very versatile, knowing seventy-two ways of transformation. It was he who stole your treasure and had your brother stored up. Since your brother is now dead, there is no need for you to mourn like that. You'd clean up your pots and pans

quickly and fix up some dried mushrooms, fresh button mushrooms, bean sprouts, bamboo shoots, soybean cakes, wheat glutes, wood ears, and vegetables. Invite us master and disciples for a meal, and we'll be pleased to recite for you once the *Receive Life Thread*."

Infuriated by what he heard, the old demon said, "I thought Bullseye 8 Rules was a guileless person but he's actually most sassy. He dares to make fun of me at this moment! Little ones, stop mourning. Untie Bullseye 8 Rules and steam him until he's soft and tender. Let me have a full stomach first, and then I'll go catch Pilgrim Sun to avenge my brother." Turning to 8 Rules, Sand-monk chided him, saying, "Isn't that nice? I told you not to talk so much! Now your talking means that you'll be steamed and eaten." Idiot himself became somewhat alarmed but a little fiend then spoke up, saying, "Great King, it's not good to steam Bullseye 8 Rules."

"Infinite Light God!" said 8 Rules. "Which elder brother is trying to pile up secret merits? I'm indeed no good if I'm steamed." Another fiend said, "After he's skinned, he'll then be good to steam." Horrified, 8 Rules said, "I'm all right! I'm all right! Though my bones and skins are coarse, I'll be tender the moment the water boils."

As they were speaking, another little fiend came from the front door to report, "Sun Pilgrim is reviling us at our door!"

"This fellow," said a startled old demon, "abuses us because he thinks there is nobody here." He then gave the order, "Little ones, hang up Bullseye 8 Rules as before, and find out how many treasures there are still in the house." A little fiend who was the housekeeper, said, "There are three treasures yet in the cave."

"Which three?" asked the old demon.

"The sword of seven stars," said the housekeeper, "the palm-leaf fan, and the pure-jade vase."

"That vase is useless!" said the old demon. "It was supposed to store up anyone who answered when his name was called but the formula was somehow passed on to that Pilgrim Sun and now our own brother has been put away. I'll not use the vase; leave it here at home. Bring me the sword and the fan, quickly." The housekeeper handed over the two treasures to the old demon who stuck the fan into his collar behind his neck and held the sword in his hand. He then called up about three hundred monsters, young and old, and told all of them to arm themselves with spears, clubs, ropes, and knives. The old demon himself also put on helmet and cuirass, covered with a flaming red silk cape. As the monsters rushed out the door, they lined up in battle formation, intent on catching the Great Sage Sun. Knowing by now that the second demon had been dissolved in the gourd, the Great Sage fastened the gourd to the belt around his waist while his hands held high the golden-hooped rod to prepare for combat. As red banners unfurled, the old fiend leaped out the door. He was dressed in *his helmet's tassel shimmered on his head and from his belt fresh, radiant colours rose. He wore a cuirass knit like dragon scales, topped with a long red cape like crackling flames. His round eyes opened wide and lightning flashed; wiry whiskers flared up like turbid fumes. His hand held lightly the seven-star sword, his shoulder half-hidden by the palm-leaf fan. He moved like clouds rushing past the ocean's peaks; like thunder his voice shook mountains and streams. An awesome Heaven-defying warrior, leading many monsters, he stormed out of the cave.* After ordering the little fiends to take their battle stations, the old demon shouted, "You ape! You're utterly wretched! You murdered my brother and broke up our fraternal bond. You're truly despicable!"

"Monster, you're the one who's asking for death!" replied Pilgrim, "Do you mean to tell me that one life of a monster-spirit is worth more than those of four creatures like my master, younger brothers, and the white horse? You think that I can bear the thought of their being hung up in the cave at this moment? That I'd agree to that? Bring them out at once and return them to me. You can add also some travel expenses and send off old monkey amiably. Then I might spare this cur-like life of yours!" The fiend of course would not permit any further exchanges; lifting his treasure sword, he slashed at the head of the Great Sage who met him with uplifted iron rod. This was quite a battle outside the entrance of the cave. *Aha! The 7-star sword and the golden-hooped rod clashed, and sparks flared up like lightning bright; the spreading cold air brought oppressive chill as vast dark clouds concealed the peaks and cliffs. This one because of his fraternal bond would not let up a bit. That one on account of the scripture monk would not slow down one whit. Each one hated with the same kind of hate; both parties cherished such hostility. They fought till Heaven and Earth darkened, scaring gods and ghosts; the sun dimmed, the smoke thickened as dragons and tigers quaked. This one ground his teeth like filing down jade nails; that one grew so mad that flames leaped out his eyes!*

*Back and forth they showed their heroic might and kept on brandishing both sword and rod.* The old demon fought with the Great Sage for 20 rounds but neither could gain the upper hand. Pointing with his sword, the old demon shouted, "Little fiends, come up together!"

Those 300 monster-spirits rushed up together and completely surrounded Pilgrim. *Dear Great Sage!* Not in the least afraid, he wielded his rod and lunged left and right, attacking with it in front and protecting himself in the rear. Those little fiends however, all had some abilities; the longer they fought, the more ferocious they became – like cotton floss sticking to one's body, they tackled Pilgrim at the waist and tugged at his legs, refusing to be beaten back. Alarmed, the Great Sage resorted to the magic of the Body beyond the Body. He plucked off a handful of hairs from under his left arm, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out, crying, "Change!"

Every piece of the hair changed into a Pilgrim. *Look at all of them!* The tall ones wielded rods, the short ones boxed with their fists, the tiniest ones grabbed the monsters' shanks, and began to gnaw on them. They fought till all the fiends were scattered in every direction crying, "Great King, we're finished! We can fight no more! The mountain's full of Pilgrim Suns!"

The magic of the Body beyond the Body thus sent the flock of monsters into a hasty retreat: only an old demon was left in the middle, surrounded on all sides, sorely pressed but with no way to run at all. Terribly frightened, the demon switched the treasure sword to his left hand; with his right he reached behind his neck and pulled out the palm-leaf fan. Facing the direction of due south (that is the direction of fire) he made a sweeping motion with the fan from the left and fanned at the ground once. Flames leaped up instantly from the ground. The treasure could produce fire just like that. An unrelenting person, the fiend fanned at the ground for 7 or 8 more times and a fierce fire raged everywhere. *Marvellous fire! The fire was neither the fire of Heaven nor the fire of a brazier; neither the wild fire on the meadows nor the fire inside an oven. It was a spark of spiritual light taken naturally from the 5 Phases. The fan also was no common thing in the mortal world, nor was it made by any human skill. It was a true treasure formed since the time chaos parted. When the fan was used to start this fire bright and brilliant, it was like the red bolts of lightning; clear and ablaze, it seemed mists iridescent. There was not even a strand of blue smoke, only a mountain full of scarlet flames. It burned till the summit pines became fire trees and cedars changed into lanterns before the cliff. The beasts of the caves, eager to live, dashed to the east and the west; the birds of the woods, zealous for their feathers, flew high and retreated wide. This divine, air-filling holocaust burned till rocks broke, rivers dried up, and all the ground turned red!* When the Great Sage saw how ferocious the fire was, he, too became quite shaken crying, "It's bad! I can stand it myself but my hairs are no good. Once they fall into the fire, they'll be burned up." Shaking his body once, he retrieved all his hairs except one piece that he used to change into a specious form of himself, pretending to flee the fire. His true body, making the fire-resisting sign with his fingers, somersaulted into the air and leaped clear of the blaze. He then headed straight for the Lotus-Flower Cave with the intent of rescuing his master. As he sped up to the entrance of the cave and lowered the direction of his cloud, he saw a hundred-odd little fiends outside the door, every one of them with head wounds or broken legs with lesions and bruises. They were the ones injured by his magic of the Body beyond the Body, all standing there whimpering and in pain. When the Great Sage saw them, he could not suppress the savagery in his nature; lifting up the iron rod, he fought all the way inside. How pitiful it was that he should bring at once to nothing *the fruits of bitter exercise to acquire human forms! They all became again old pieces of hair and hide!* After the Great Sage had finished off all the little fiends, he raced into the cave with the intent of untying his master. Just then he saw again a fiery glow inside and he became terribly flustered crying, "Undone! Undone! If this fire is starting again even at the back door, old monkey will find it hard to save Master." As he was thus in alarm, he looked again more carefully. Ah! It was not the glow of fire but actually a beam of golden light. Composing himself, he walked inside to have another look and found that the source of the glow was the pure mutton-jade vase. Filled with delight, he said to himself, "What a lovely treasure! This vase was glowing also when the little fiends took it up the mountain. Then old monkey got it, only to have it taken away again by the monster. It's hidden here and today it's still glowing." Look at him! He stole the vase at once and turned quickly to walk out of the cave, not even bothering to try to rescue his master. As soon as he came out the door, he ran into the demon returning from the south, holding the treasure sword and the fan. The Great Sage did not have time to hide himself, and the demon lifted his sword instantly to slash at his head. Mounting his cloud somersault, the Great Sage leaped up and vanished immediately. When the fiend arrived at his own door, he saw corpses lying everywhere, all the monster-spirits under his command. He was so stricken that he lifted his face toward Heaven and sighed loudly before bursting into tears, crying "O misery! O what bitterness!" For him a testimonial poem says:

*Hateful are the sly ape and the forward horse!*

*The seeds divine who came to the world of dust for 1 erring thought of leaving Heaven, fell on this mountain and destroyed themselves.*

*What bitter grief when flocks of birds break up!*

*How tears flow when monster troops are wiped out!*

*When'll the scourge end, the chastisement cease that they may return to their primal forms?*

Overborne by grief, the old demon wailed step by step into the cave; he saw that the furniture and other belongings remained but not even a single person was in sight. In this total silence, he became sadder than ever: as he sat all by himself in the cave, he placed his head on a stone table, his sword he leaned against the table, and the fan he stuck back into his collar. Soon, he fell into a deep sleep, just as the proverb says: *Your spirit is full when you're happy; once dejected you tend to be sleepy!* The Great Sage Sun turned the direction of his cloud somersault around and stood before the mountain, thinking again of trying to rescue his master. Fastening the vase tightly to his belt, he returned to the entrance of the cave to see what was happening. The 2 doors he found wide open but not a sound could be heard. With light, stealthy steps he slipped inside and discovered the demon sleeping soundly, leaning on the stone table. The palm-leaf fan was sticking out of his collar, half covering the back of his head while the sword of seven stars was placed against the table. He tiptoed near the demon, pulled out the fan, and turned at once to flee outside. The fan however, scraped against the hair of the fiend when it was pulled out, rousing him from his sleep. When he lifted his head to look and found that his fan had been stolen by Pilgrim Sun, he gave chase at once with the sword. The Great Sage leaped out the door and, having stuck the fan into his waist, met the fiend with both hands wielding the iron rod. *This was a marvellous battle! The maddened demon king, his cap raised by angry hair wanted to swallow with one gulp his foe – but even that's no relief! He reviled the monkey thus: "You mock me far too much! You took our many lives. You steal my treasure now. This time I'll not spare you, I'll see that you're dead!"*

The Great Sage rapped the demon: "You don't know what's good for you! A student wants to fight old monkey? How'd an egg smash up a rock?"

*The treasure sword came, the iron rod moved: the 2 would no longer cherish kindness. Repeatedly a contest they waged; over and over they used their martial skill. Because of the scripture monk who sought at Spirit Mount a place, Bringing discord to Metal and Fire, the 5 Phases confused, lost their peace. They showed their awe-inspiring, magic power; kicked up dust and stones to flaunt their might. They fought till the sun was about to sink: the demon grew weak and retreated first.* The demon fought with the Great Sage for more than 30 rounds; when the sky darkened, the demon fled in defeat and headed for the southwest in the direction of the Crush-Dragon Cave. Lowering the direction of his cloud, the Great Sage dashed into the Lotus-Flower Cave and untied the Tang Monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk. After they were freed, they thanked Pilgrim while asking, "Where did the demons go?"

"The second demon's been stored up in the gourd," said Pilgrim, "and he must be completely dissolved by now. The old demon's defeated by me just now and he fled toward the Crush-Dragon Cave in the southwest. Over half of the little fiends of the cave have been killed by the body-division magic of old monkey and the rest who were defeated have also been wiped out by me. Only after that'd I come in here to rescue and free all of you."

Profoundly grateful, the Tang Monk said, "Disciple, you must've worked awfully hard!"

"Indeed," said Pilgrim laughing, "though all of you'd to bear the pain of being hung up, old monkey's been unable even to rest his legs! I'd to be on the go even more frequently than the postal messenger: coming in and getting out, there was never a moment's pause. Only after having managed to steal his treasures I'd defeat the demons."

"Elder Brother," said Bullseye 8 Rules, "take out the gourd and let us have a look inside. The second demon, I suppose, must have been dissolved by now."

The Great Sage first untied the pure vase; he then took out the gold rope and the fan before he held the gourd in his hands. Then he said, "Don't look! Don't look! Just now he'd old monkey stored up and only after I deceived him into opening the lid by feigning some gargling noise did I escape. We mustn't therefore lift up the lid for he may still pull some tricks and escape."

Thereafter master and disciples happily searched the cave and found some of the monsters' rice, noodles, and vegetables; after heating and washing some of the pots and pans, they prepared a vegetarian meal and ate their fill. They rested in the cave for the night and soon it was morning again. The old demon went straight to the Crush-Dragon Mountain and gathered together all the female fiends to whom he gave a thorough account of how his mum was beaten to death, how his brother was sucked into the gourd, how his monster soldiers were wiped out, and how his treasures had been stolen. The female fiends all burst into tears, wailing for a long time. Then the old demon said, "Stop crying, all of you. I still have with me the sword of seven stars, and I plan to go with all of you, female soldiers, to the back of this Crush-Dragon Mountain to borrow some more troops from my maternal relative. I'm determined to capture that Pilgrim Sun to exact vengeance."

Before he had even finished speaking, a little fiend came from the door to report, saying, "Great King, your Venerable Maternal Uncle from behind the mountain has led his troops here." When the old demon heard this, he quickly changed into mourning garments of plain white silk and saluted to receive his visitor. The Venerable Maternal Uncle was the younger brother of his mum who went by the name, Great King Fox Number Seven. Because he had already received the report from some of his monster soldiers out on patrol that his elder sister was beaten to death by Pilgrim Sun who then changed into the form of his sister to swindle treasures from his nephew, and that there had been fighting for several days on the Level-Top Mountain, he called up some two hundred soldiers from his own cave to offer his assistance. He stopped first at his sister's home to find out whether indeed she had died. The moment he walked in the door however, he saw the old demon in mourning garments, and the two of them burst into loud wailing. After some time, the old demon knelt down to give a complete account of what had taken place. Growing very angry, Number Seven ordered the old demon to take off his mourning garments, to pick up his treasure sword, and to call up all the female monsters. Together they mounted the wind and the cloud, speeding toward the northeast. The Great Sage just then was telling Sand-monk to prepare breakfast so that they could journey after the meal when suddenly he heard the sound of the wind. Walking out the door, he found a horde of fiendish troops

approaching from the southwest. Somewhat startled, Pilgrim dashed inside, calling to 8 Rules, “Brother, the monster-spirit has brought fresh troops to help him.” When Tripitaka heard these words, he paled with fright, saying, “Disciple, what shall we do?”

“Relax, relax!” said Pilgrim, chuckling. “Give me all of his treasures.”

The Great Sage fastened the gourd and the vase to his waist, stuffed the gold rope into his sleeve, and stuck the palm-leaf fan into his collar. Wielding the iron rod with both hands, he told Sand-monk to stand and guard their master sitting in the cave while he and 8 Rules holding the muckrake went out to meet their adversaries. The fiendish creatures ranged themselves in battle formation, and the one at the very forefront was the Great King Number 7 who had a jade-like face, a long beard, wiry eyebrows, and knifelike ears. He wore a golden helmet on his head and a knitted cuirass on his body; his hands held a *square-sky* halberd. <sup>5</sup>In a loud voice he shouted, “You audacious, lawless ape! How dare you oppress people like that! You stole our treasures, slaughtered our relatives, killed our soldiers, and you even had the nerve to take over our cave dwelling. Stick out your neck quickly and accept death, so that I can avenge my sister’s murder!”

“You reckless hairy lump!” cried Pilgrim. “You don’t know what your Grandpa Sun can do! Don’t run away! Take a blow from my rod!” The fiend stepped aside to dodge the blow before turning again to meet him with the halberd. The two of them fought back and forth on the mountain for three or four rounds, and the fiend grew weak already. As he fled, Pilgrim gave chase and encountered the old demon who also fought with him for three rounds. Then the Number Seven Fox turned around and attacked once more. When 8 Rules on this side saw him, he quickly stopped him with the nine-pronged rake; so, each of the pilgrims took on a monster and they fought for a long time without reaching a decision. The old demon shouted for all the monster soldiers to join the battle also. The Tang Monk who was seated in the cave when he heard earth-shaking cries coming from outside. “Sand-monk,” he said, “go and see how your brothers are doing in the battle.”

Lifting high his fiend-routing staff, Sand-monk gave a terrific cry as he raced outside, beating back at once many of the monsters. When Number Seven saw that the tide was turning against them, he spun around and ran, only to be caught up by 8 Rules who brought the rake down hard on his back. *This one blow caused 9 spots of bright red to spurt out; pity one spirit’s true nature going to the world beyond.* When 8 Rules dragged him aside and stripped off his clothes, he found that the Great King, too, was a fox spirit. When the old demon saw that his maternal uncle was slain, he abandoned Pilgrim and attacked 8 Rules with the sword. 8 Rules blocked the blow with the muckrake; as they fought, Sand-monk charged near and struck with his staff. Unable to withstand the two of them, the demon mounted wind and cloud to flee toward the south with 8 Rules and Sand-monk hard on his heels. When the Great Sage saw that, he swiftly leaped into the air, untied the vase, and took aim at the old demon, crying, “Great King Golden Horn!” The fiend thought that it was one of his defeated little demons calling him, and he turned to give his reply. Instantly he was sucked also into the vase that was then sealed by Pilgrim with the tape bearing the words, “May Laozi Act Quickly According to This Command.” The sword of seven stars dropped to the ground below and it, too, became the property of Pilgrim. “Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, coming up to meet Pilgrim, “you’ve got the sword. But where’s the monster-spirit?”

“Finished!” said Pilgrim, chuckling, “He’s stored up in this vase of mine.” When they heard this, Sand-monk and 8 Rules were utterly delighted.

After they had completely wiped out the ogres and monsters, they went back to the cave to present the good news to Tripitaka, saying, “The mountain has been purged of all monsters. Let Master mount up so that we may journey again.” Highly pleased, Tripitaka finished the morning meal with his disciples whereupon they put in order the luggage and the horse and found their way to the West. As they walked, a blind man suddenly appeared from the side of the road and caught hold of Tripitaka’s horse, saying, “Monk where are you going? Give me back my treasures!” Horrified, 8 Rules cried, “We’re finished! Here’s another old monster coming to ask for his treasures!” Pilgrim looked at the man carefully and saw that he was actually Laozi. Hurriedly he drew near and saluted saying, “Venerable Sir where are you going?” The old patriarch swiftly mounted his jade throne that rose and stopped in mid-air. “Pilgrim Sun,” he said, “return my treasures.” The Great Sage also rose into the air saying, “What treasures?”

“The gourd,” said Laozi, “is what I use to store elixir while the pure vase is my water container. The treasure sword I use to subdue demons, the fan is for tending my fires, and the rope is actually a belt of my gown. Those two monsters happen to be two Daoist youths: one looks after my golden brazier while the other my silver brazier. I was just searching for them, for they stole the treasures and left the Region Above. Now you’ve caught them, this will be your merit.”

The Great Sage said, “Venerable Sir, you’re not very honourable! That you’d permit your kin to become demons should make you guilty of oversight in the governance of your household.”

“It’s really not my affair,” said Laozi, “so don’t blame the wrong person. These youths were requested by the Nun from the sea three times; they were to be sent here and transformed into demons, to test all of you and see whether master and disciples are sincere in going to the West.”

When the Great Sage heard these words, he thought to himself, “What a rogue is this Nun! At the time when she delivered old monkey and told me to accompany the Tang Monk to procure scriptures in the West, I said that the journey would be a difficult one. She even promised that she herself would come to rescue us when we encounter grave difficulties but instead, she sent monster-spirits here to harass us. The way she double-talks, she deserves to be a spinster for the rest of her life!” He then said to Laozi, “If Venerable Sir didn’t show up personally, I’d never have returned these things to you. But since you’ve made the appearance and told me the truth, you can take them away.” After receiving the five treasures, Laozi lifted the seals of the gourd and the vase and poured out two masses of divine ether. With one point of his finger he transformed the ether again into two youths, standing on his left and right. Ten thousand strands of propitious light appeared as *they all drifted toward the Tushita Palace; freely they went straight up to Heaven’s canopy.*

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The Causes cease when Mind Monkey’s rectified; smash through the left side door to view the bright moon

Pilgrim who lowered the direction of his cloud and presented to his master a thorough account of how the Nun requested for the youths and how Laozi took back his treasures. Tripitaka was deeply grateful; he redoubled his efforts and determination to go to the West at all costs. He mounted the horse once more; while Bullseye 8 Rules poled the luggage, Sand-monk took hold of the bridle, and Pilgrim Sun took up his iron rod to lead the way down the tall mountain. As they proceeded, we can’t tell you in full how they rested by the waters and dined in the wind, how they were covered with frost and exposed to the dew. Master and disciples journeyed for a long time and again they found a mountain blocking their path.

“Disciples,” said Tripitaka loudly on the horse, “Look how tall and rugged is that mountain. We’d be most careful, for I fear that there may be some demonic miasmas coming to attack us.” Pilgrim said, “Stop thinking foolish thoughts, Master. Compose yourself and keep your mind from wandering; nothing will happen to you.”

“O Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “why is it so difficult to reach the Western Heaven? I remember that since leaving the city Chang’an, spring has come and gone on this road several times, autumn has arrived to be followed by winter – at least four or five years must have gone by. Why is it that we still haven’t reached our destination?”

“It’s too early! It’s too early!” said Pilgrim, roaring with laughter. “We’ve not even left the main door yet!”

“Stop fibbing, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules. “There’s no such big mansion in this world.”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “we’re just moving around in one of the halls inside.” Laughing, Sand-monk said, “Elder Brother, stop talking so big to scare us. Where could you find such a huge house? Even if there were, you’d be unable to find cross beams that were long enough.”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “from the point of view of old monkey, this blue sky is our roof, the sun and moon are our windows, the five sacred mountains our pillars, and the whole Heaven and Earth is but one large chamber.” When 8 Rules heard this, he sighed, “We’re finished! We’re finished! All right, move around some more and we’ll go back.”

“No need for this kind of silly chatter,” said Pilgrim. “Just follow old monkey and move.” *Dear Great Sage!*

Placing the iron rod horizontally across his shoulders, he led the Tang Monk firmly up the mountain road and went straight ahead. As the master looked around on the horse, he saw some lovely mountain scenery. *Truly the rugged summits touch the dipper stars and treetops seem to join the sky and clouds. Within piles of blue mist ape cries often arise from the valley; in the shades of riotous green one hears cranes calling beneath the pines. Howling mountain sprites rear up in the streams to mock the woodsman; aged fox spirits sit beside the cliff to frighten the hunter. Marvellous Mountain! Look how steep it is on all sides, how precipitous everywhere! Strange knotty pines topped by green canopies; dried, aged trees dangling creepers and vines. The stream surges, its piercing cold chills even the hairs of man; the peak shoots up, its eye-smarting clear wind makes one skittish. Frequently you listen to big cats roar; now and then you hear mountain birds call. Flocks of fallow deer cut through the brambles, leaping here and there; hordes of river deer seeking food of the wilds stampede back and forth. Standing on the meadow, 1 can see no traveller; walk in the canyons and there are wolves on all sides. It’s no place for God to meditate, wholly the domain of darting birds and beasts.* With fear and trembling, the master entered deep into the mountain. Growing more melancholy, he stopped the horse and said, “O Wukong! Once I was resolved<sup>3</sup> to make that mountain<sup>4</sup> trip, the king didn’t wait to send me from the city. I met on the way the three-cornered sedge; I pushed hard my horse decked with bridle bells. I searched steep slopes and streams to find scriptures; I scaled the peaks to bow to God. If myself I guard to complete my tour when may I go home to salute the court?”

When the Great Sage heard these words, he roared with laughter saying, “Master, don’t be so anxious and impatient. Relax and push forward. In due time, I assure you that ‘success will come naturally when merit’s achieved.”

As master and disciples enjoyed the mountain scenery while they walked along, the red orb soon sank toward the west. *Truly no traveller walked by the 10-mile arbour but stars appeared in the 9-fold heavens. Boats of 8 rivers returned to their piers; 7000 towns and counties shut their gates. The lords of 6 chambers and 5 bureaux all retired; from 4 seas and 3 rivers fish-lines withdrew. Gongs and drums sounded on 2 tall towers; 1 orb of bright moon filled the universe.* As he peered into the distance on the back of the horse, the master saw in the fold of the mountain several multi-storied buildings

“Disciples,” said Tripitaka, “it’s getting late now and we’re fortunate to find some buildings over there. I think it must be either a Daoist abbey or a Religious monastery. Let’s go there, ask for lodging for the night, and we can resume our journey in the morning.”

Pilgrim said, “Master, you’re right. Let’s not hurry however; let me examine the place first.” Leaping into the air, the Great Sage stared intently and found that it was indeed a Religious monastery. He saw *8-word brick wall<sup>6</sup> painted muddy red; doors on 2 sides studded with nails of gold; rows of tiered-terrace sheltered by the peak; buildings, multi-storeyed, hidden in the mount. Gods Alcove<sup>6</sup> faced the Siddhartha Hall; the Morning-Sun Tower met the Great Hero<sup>7</sup> Gate. Clouds rested on a 7-tiered pagoda and glory shone from 3 honoured gods. <sup>8</sup>The Beautiful 1 with Glory and Auspiciousness Platform faced the monastic house; Maitreya Hall joined the Great Mercy Room. Blue light exercised outside the Mount-Viewing Lodge; purple clouds bloomed above the Void-Treading Tower. Pine retreats and bamboo courts – fresh, lovely green. Abbot rooms and Zen commons – clean everywhere. Gracefully, quietly services were held. Solemn but joyful priests walked the grounds. Chan monks lectured in the Chan classrooms and instruments blared from poems halls. Udumbara petals dropped from the Wondrous-Height Terrace; Pattra<sup>9</sup> leaves grew beneath the Law-Expounding Platform. So it was that woods sheltered this land of the 3 Jewels and mountains embraced this home of a Sanskrit Prince. Half a wall of lamps with flickering lights and smoke; a row of incense obscured by fragrant fog.* Descending from his cloud, the Great Sage Sun reported to Tripitaka saying, “Master, it’s indeed a Religious monastery. We can go there to ask for lodging.” The master urged his horse on and went straight up to the main gate. “Master,” said Pilgrim, “what monastery is this?”

“The hoofs of my horse have just come to a stop and the tips of my feet have yet to leave the stirrups,” said Tripitaka, “and you ask me what monastery this is? How thoughtless you’re!”

Pilgrim said, “You’ve, your venerable self been a monk since your youth and must’ve studied the Confucian classics before you proceeded to lecture on the religion *Threads.* You must’ve mastered both literature and philosophy before you received such royal favours from the Tang Emperor. There’re big words on the door of this monastery. Why can’t you recognise them?”

“Impudent ape!” snapped the elder. “You mouth such senseless words! I was facing the west as I rode and my eyes were shortly blinded by the glare of the sun. There might be words on the door but they’re covered by grime and dirt. That’s why I can’t make them out.”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he stretched his torso and at once grew to over twenty feet tall. Wiping away the dirt, he said, “Master, please take a look.” There were 8 words in large characters:

Precious Grove Monastery built by the Imperial Command

After Pilgrim changed back into his normal size, he said, “Master that one of us should go in to ask for lodging?”

“I’ll go inside,” said Tripitaka, “for all of you’re ugly in your appearance, uncouth in your speech, and arrogant in your manner. If you happen to offend the local monks, they may refuse our request and that’ll not be good.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “let Master go in at once. No need for words anymore.”

Abandoning his priestly staff and untying his cloak, the elder straightened out his clothes and walked inside the main gate with folded hands. There he found behind red lacquered railings a pair of Lightning-guardians<sup>10</sup> whose molten images were fearsome indeed: *1 has an iron face and steel whiskers as if alive; 1 has bushy brows and round eyes that seem real. On the left, the fist bones like raw iron jut out; on the right, the palms are cragged like crude bronze. Golden chain armour of splendid lustre; bright helmets and wind-blown sashes of silk. Offerings in the West to God are bounteous: in stone tripods the incense fires glow red.* When Tripitaka saw this, he nodded and gave a lengthy sigh saying, “If in our Land of the East there’re enough people who’d mould such huge Nuns with clay and worship them with fires and incense, this disciple would have no need to go to the Western Heaven.” As he was saying this to himself, he reached the second gate where he discovered inside the images of the Four Deity-Kings: The Upholder of the Nation, Vaiśravaṇa, Virūḍhaka, and Virūpākṣa. Each of them, stationed according to his position in the east, north, south, and west, was also symbolic of his powers to make the winds harmonious and the rains seasonal. After he entered the second gate, he saw four tall pines, each of which had a luxuriant top shaped like an umbrella. As he raised his head, he discovered that he had arrived before the Precious Hall of the Great Hero. Folding his hands with complete reverence, the elder saluted himself and worshipped; afterwards, he arose and went past a god platform to reach the rear gate. There he found the image of the reclining Guanyin who proffered deliverance to the creatures of South Sea.<sup>11</sup> On the walls were carvings –



all done by skilful artisans – of shrimps, fishes, crabs, and turtles; sticking out their heads and flapping their tails, they were frolicking in the billows and leaping over the waves. The elder again nodded his head four or five times, sighing loudly, “What a pity! Even scaly creatures would worship God! Why is it that humans are unwilling to practice religion?”

As he was thus speaking to himself, a worker emerged from the third gate. When he saw the uncommon and handsome features of Tripitaka, he hurried forward and saluted saying, “Where did the master come from?”

“This disciple,” said Tripitaka, “was sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go to the Western Heaven and seek scriptures from God. It was getting late when we arrived at your honoured region, and I came to ask for lodging for one night.”

“Please do not be offended, Master,” said the worker, “but I can’t assume responsibility here. I’m just a manual labourer in charge of sweeping the grounds and tolling the bell. There’s an old master inside who is the head of the household. Let me go in and report to him; if he wishes to ask you to stay, I’ll come out to give you the invitation; if not, I dare not detain you.” Tripitaka said, “Sorry for all that inconvenience.”

The worker hurried to the abbot chamber and reported, “Venerable Dad, there’s someone outside.” The monk-official arose immediately, changed his clothes, adjusted his Vairocana hat, and put on a cassock before he went to open the door to receive his visitor. “What man has arrived?” he asked the worker who pointed with his finger and replied, “Isn’t that a man there behind the main hall?” Bald-headed, wearing an Awakening-religion gown that was in shreds and a pair of sandals muddy and wet, Tripitaka was reclining by the door. When the monk-official saw him, he became enraged, saying, “Worker, you deserve to be flogged! Don’t you know that a monk-official like I’d come out and receive only the gentlemen from the cities who come here to offer incense? For this sort of a monk, why did you give me a phony report and ask me to receive him? Just look at his face! He can’t be an honest man! He has to be some kind of mendicant who wants to sleep here now that it’s getting late. You think I’m going to permit him to mess up our abbot chamber? Tell him to squat in the corridor. Why bother me?”

He turned around and left immediately. When the elder heard these words, tears filled his eyes and he said, “How pitiful! How pitiful! Truly ‘a man away from home is cheap!’ This disciple left home from his youth to become a monk. I didn’t *do penance while eating meat with wicked glee or read scriptures in wrath to soil the mind of Chan*. Nor did I *cast tiles and stones to damage God’s hall or rip down the gold from an Arhat’s face*. Alas, how pitiful! I don’t know which disciple it was that I’d offended Heaven and Earth, so that I’ve to meet unkind people so frequently in this life. Monk, if you don’t want to give us lodging, that’s all right. But why must you say such nasty things, telling us to go and squat in the corridors? I’d better not repeat these words to Pilgrim, for if I did, that monkey would come in and a few blows of his iron rod would break all your shanks. All right! All right! The proverb says, ‘Man must put propriety and poems first.’ Let me go inside and ask him once more and see what he really intends to do with us.”

Following the tracks of the monk-official, the master went up to the door of the abbot chamber where he found the monk-official who, having taken off his outer garments, was sitting inside, still panting with rage. He was not reciting the *Threads*, nor was he drawing up any service for a family; all the Tang Monk could see was a pile of papers on a table beside him. Not daring to walk inside abruptly but standing instead in the courtyard, Tripitaka saluted and cried out, “Old Abbot, this disciple salutes you.” Somewhat annoyed by the fact that Tripitaka followed him inside, the monk only pretended to return the greeting, saying, “Where did you come from?”

“This disciple,” replied Tripitaka, “has been sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go to the Western Heaven and seek scriptures from the Living God. I passed through your honoured region, it was getting late, and I came to ask for lodging for one night. Tomorrow, I’ll leave before daybreak. I beseech the Old Abbot to grant me this request.” Only then did the monk-official get up from his seat and say, “Are you that Tripitaka Tang?”

Tripitaka said, “Yes.”

“If you’re going to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures,” said the monk-official, “how is it that you don’t even know your way?” Tripitaka said, “Your disciple has never passed through your honoured region and that’s why he doesn’t know the way here.”

“Due west of here,” he said, “about four or five miles is a Thirty-Mile Inn, in which there is also someone selling food. It will be convenient for you to stay there whereas it’s not convenient here for me to entertain a monk like yourself who has come from a great distance.”

“Abbot,” said Tripitaka with hands folded, “the ancients declared that ‘A Daoist abbey or a Religious monastery all may be considered a lodge for a priest who has a claim for three percent of the food the moment he sees the temple gate.’ Why do you refuse me?”

“You mendicant monk!” shouted the monk-official angrily. “All you know is how to cajole and wheedle!”

Tripitaka said, “What do you mean by cajole and wheedle?”

The monk-official said, “Remember what the ancients said? *A tiger comes to town; each house will shut the door. Though no one’s bitten, its name’s already poor!*”

“What do you mean by ‘Its name’s already poor?’” asked Tripitaka.

“A few years ago,” said the monk-official, “there was a group of mendicants who arrived and sat in front of our monastery gate. I took pity on their hardship when I saw how destitute they were, every one of them bald-headed and barefooted, shoeless and in rags. So I invited them into the abbot chamber, gave them honoured seats, and fed them a vegetarian meal. Moreover, I even gave each of them an old suit of clothes to wear and asked them to stay for a few days. How would I know that they could become so greedy for easy food and clothing that they would remain for seven or eight years, never giving a thought to leaving again? I didn’t mind even their staying but they indulged in all sorts of shabby activities.”

“What kind of shabby activities?” Tripitaka asked.

The monk-official said, “Just listen to my tale: *idle, they threw tiles by the pale; bored, they pulled nails off the wall. In winter they fed fires with ripped window panes, leaving torn doors when hot on the road. They pulled banners to make leggings; gluttonous, they stole our turnips. From glass vases they often poured our oil, gaming by grabbing bowls and dishes!*”<sup>12</sup>

When Tripitaka heard these words, he said to himself, “How pitiful! Is this disciple that kind of spineless monk?” He was about to cry but he feared also that the old monk in the monastery would laugh at him. Swallowing his pride and his annoyance while wiping away his tears secretly with his robe, he walked out quickly and met his three disciples. When Pilgrim saw how angry his master looked, he went forward to ask, “Master, did the monks in the monastery strike you?”

“They didn’t,” said the Tang Monk.

“They must have done so,” said 8 Rules, “for if they haven’t, why is your voice cracking?”

“Have they scolded you?” asked Pilgrim. The Tang Monk said, “They haven’t either.”

“If they haven’t struck you,” said Pilgrim, “or scolded you, why are you upset? You must be getting homesick.”

“Disciples,” said the Tang Monk, “they say that it’s not convenient here.”

“They must be Daoists here, then?” said Pilgrim, laughing.

“Only a Daoist abbey has Daoists,” said the Tang Monk, raging. “There’re only monks in a monastery.”

Pilgrim said, “You’re useless! If there’re monks here, they’re the same as we. The proverb says, *gathered in God’s assembly are all men of affinity*. You sit here and let me go inside to look around.”

Dear Pilgrim! Giving the fillet on his head a squeeze and tightening the skirt around his waist, he went straight up to the Precious Hall of the Great Hero, holding his iron rod. There he pointed at the statues of the three Gods and said, “You’re actually idols moulded with clay and adorned with gold. You don’t possess one whit of efficacy inside! Or do you? Old monkey who is accompanying the Tang Monk to go to the Western Heaven and seek the true scriptures from God, has come here tonight specially to ask for lodging. You’d better hurry and announce my arrival. If you don’t put us up, my rod will smash the golden bodies and reveal your original forms of mud!”

As the Great Sage was making his threats and intimidations, a worker in charge of vespers arrived with several sticks of lighted incense to be placed in the urn before the images of God. One snarl of Pilgrim sent him tumbling; when he scrambled up and saw the face, he fell down again. Stumbling all over, he fled into the abbot chamber and made the report, saying, “Holy Dad, there’s a monk outside.”

“All of you workers deserve to be flogged!” said the monk-official. “I told you people before that they should be sent to squat in the corridors up front. Why make another announcement? One more word and I’ll give you twenty lashes!”

“Holy Dad,” said the worker, “this monk is not the same as the other one; he’s mean and fierce looking.”

“How does he look?” asked the monk-official. The worker replied, “He’s someone with round eyes, forked ears, a face full of hairs, and a beak like the thunder god’s. He has a rod in his hands, furiously grinding his teeth to find someone to beat.”

“Let me go out and have a look,” said the monk-official.

The moment he opened the door, he saw Pilgrim barging in. It was a hideous sight indeed! A bumpy, scabrous face, a pair of yellow eyeballs, a sunken forehead, and long, protruding fangs – he seemed virtually an overcooked crab with meat inside and cartilage outside! So panic-stricken was the old monk that he slammed shut the door of the abbot chamber at once. Pilgrim however, rushed up to it and smashed it to pieces, crying, “Hurry up and clean out one thousand rooms! Old monkey wants to take a nap!”

As he attempted to hide in the room, the monk-official said to the worker, “No wonder he’s so ugly! Talking big has caused him to end up with a face like that! Our place here, including abbot chambers, God halls, bell-and-drum towers, and the two corridors, has barely three hundred rooms. He wants a thousand for him to take a nap. Where are we going to get these rooms?”

“Master,” said the worker, “I’m a man whose gall’s been busted by fear. I’ll let you answer him any way you please.”

Trembling all over, the monk-official said in a loud voice, “The elder who wants lodging, please hear me. It’s truly inconvenient for this small, humble monastery of ours to entertain you. Please go somewhere to stay.”

Pilgrim transformed his rod until it had the circumference of a basin’s; then he stuck it straight up in the courtyard. “Monk,” he said, “if it’s inconvenient, you move out.”

The monk-official said, “We’ve lived here since our youth; our grandmasters passed the place on to our masters and they in turn to us. We want to give it to our heirs. What sort of a person’s he that he’d so rashly ask us to move?”

“Venerable Dad,” said the worker, “we can’t muddle through like this. Why not move out? That pole of his is going to come smashing in!”

“Stop babbling!” said the monk-official. “We’ve altogether five hundred monks here, old and young. Where’re we going to move to? Even if we do move out, we’ve no other place to stay.”

Hearing this, Pilgrim said, “Monk, if you’ve no place to move, one of you must come out and be caned.”

The old monk said to the worker, “You go out and take the caning for me.”

Horrified, the worker said, “O Dad! With that huge pole, and you ask me to take the caning!”

The old monk said, “As the proverb says, ‘It may take a thousand days to feed an army but only one day to use it.’ Why don’t you go out?”

“Don’t speak of being caned by that huge pole,” said the worker. “Even if it just falls on you, you’ll be reduced to a meat patty.”

“Yes,” said the old monk, “let’s not speak of falling on someone. If it remains standing in the courtyard, one can crack his head bumping into it at night if one forgets it’s there.”

“Master,” said the worker, “if you know that’s how heavy it is, why you ask me to go out and take the caning for you?”

After he asked this question, the 2 of them began to quarrel between themselves. Hearing all that noise, Pilgrim said to himself, “They really can’t take it. If I kill each of them with one blow of my rod, Master will accuse me again of working violence. Let me find something to strike at and show them what I can do.” He lifted his head and discovered a stone lion outside the door of the abbot chamber. Raising up the rod, he slammed it on the lion and reduced it to powder. The monk caught sight of the blow through a tiny hole in the window and, almost paralysed with fear, began crawling under the bed while the worker tried desperately to creep into the opening of the kitchen range, yelling all the time: “Dad! The rod’s too heavy! The rod’s too heavy! I can’t take it! It’s convenient! It’s convenient!”

Pilgrim said, “Monk, I’ll not hit you now. I’m asking you, how many monks are there in this monastery?” Shaking all over, the monk-official said, “There are two hundred and eighty-five chambers back and front, and we’ve altogether five hundred certified monks.”

“Go quickly and call up every one of those five hundred monks,” said Pilgrim. “Tell them to put on their long robes and receive my master in here. Then I’ll not hit you.”

“Dad,” said the monk-official, “if you’ll not hit us, we’ll be glad even to carry him inside.”

“Go now!” said Pilgrim. The monk-official said to the worker, “Don’t tell me that your gall has been busted by fear. Even if your heart is busted, you still have to go and call up these people to welcome the Holy Dad Tang.”

With no alternative at all, the worker had to risk his life. He dared not however, walk out the door but crawled out instead in the back through the dog hole from where he went to the main hall in front. He began striking the bell on the west and beating the drum on the east. The sounds of these 2 instruments soon aroused all the monks living in their quarters along the two corridors. They arrived at the main hall and asked, “It’s still early. Why do you beat the drum and strike the bell?”

"Change your clothes quickly," said the worker, "and line yourselves up to follow Old Master to go out of the gate in order to welcome a Holy Dad from the Tang court." The various monks indeed arranged themselves in order to go out of the gate for the reception; some of them put on their cassocks while others put on their togas. Those who had neither wore long, bell-shaped gowns while the poorest ones folded up their skirts and draped them over both their shoulders. When Pilgrim saw them, he asked, "Monks, what kind of clothes do you've on?" When the monks saw how fierce and ugly he looked, they said, "Dad, don't hit us. Let's tell you what we've on. The cloth's donated to us by the families in the city. As we've no tailor around here, we've to make our own clothes. The style is called A Wrap of Woe."

Smiling silently to himself when he heard these words, Pilgrim guarded the monks and saw to it that each one of them walked out of the gate and kneeled down. After he respected, the monk-official cried out: "Venerable Dad Tang, please go to the abbot chamber and take a seat." When 8 Rules saw what was happening, he said, "Master is so incompetent! When you walked inside just now, you returned not only with tears but you're pouting so much that you looked as if two flasks of oil had been hung on your lips. Now, what sort of cunning does Elder Brother have that makes them respect to receive us?"

"You Idiot!" said Tripitaka. "You don't know what's going on! As the proverb says, 'Even ghosts are afraid of nasty people.'"

When the Tang Monk saw them respecting, he was very embarrassed and he approached them, saying, "Please rise, all of you." The various monks continued to respect, saying, "If the Venerable Dad could speak on our behalf to your disciple and ask him not to hit us with that pole, we'd be willing to kneel here for a whole month."

"Wukong," cried the Tang Monk, "don't hit them."

"I've not," said Pilgrim, "for if I did, they would have been exterminated."

Only then did those monks get up; some went to lead the horse while others took up the pole of luggage. They lifted up the Tang Monk, carried 8 Rules, and took hold of Sand-monk – all crowded inside the monastery gate and headed for the abbot chamber in the back. After the pilgrims took their seats, the monks came again to do obeisance. "Abbot, please rise," said Tripitaka. "There's no need for you to go through such ceremony anymore, or your poor monk will find it much too burdensome. You and I after all are all disciples within the gate of God."

"The Venerable Dad," said the monk-official, "is an imperial envoy of a noble nation, and this humble monk has not properly welcomed you when you reached our desolate mountain. Our vulgar eyes could not recognise your esteemed countenance, though it was our good fortune that we'd meet. Permit me to ask the Venerable Dad to tell me whether he was eating meat or vegetarian food on the way. We can then prepare your meal."

"Vegetarian food," said Tripitaka.

"Disciples," said the monk-official, "this Holy Dad prefers vegetarian food."

Pilgrim said, "We, too, have been eating vegetarian food. We've maintained such a diet in fact even before we're born."

"O Dad!" exclaimed that monk. "Such violent men would eat vegetarian food, too?"

Another monk who was slightly more courageous, drew near and asked again, "If the Venerable Dads prefer vegetarian food, how much rice should we cook?"

"You cheapskates!" said 8 Rules. "Why ask? For our family, cook a picul of rice."

The monks all became frightened; they went at once to scrub and wash the pots and pans and to prepare the meal. Bright lamps were brought in as they set the table to entertain the Tang Monk. After master and disciples had eaten the vegetarian dinner, the monks took away the dishes and the furniture. "Old Abbot," said Tripitaka, thanking him, "we're greatly indebted to you and your hospitality."

"Not at all, not at all," said the monk-official, "we've not done anything for you." Tripitaka asked, "Where should we sleep?"

"Don't be impatient, Venerable Dad," said the monk-official. "This humble cleric has everything planned." He then asked, "Worker, do you've some people there who are free to work?"

"Yes, Master," said the worker. The monk-official instructed them, saying, "Two of you'd go and get some hay to feed the horse of Venerable Dad Tang. The rest can go to the front and clean up three of the Chan halls; set up bedding and mosquito nets so that the Venerable Dads can take their rest."

The workers obeyed and each of them finished the preparation before returning to invite the Tang Monk to go take his rest. Master and disciples led the horse and toted the luggage; they left the abbot chamber and went to the door of the Chan halls where they saw inside brightly lit lamps and four rattan beds with bedding all laid out. Pilgrim asked the worker who brought the hay to haul it inside the Chan halls where they tied up the white horse also. The workers were then told to leave. As Tripitaka sat down beneath the lamps, two rows of monks – all five hundred of them – stood on both sides and waited upon him, not daring to leave. Tripitaka got up and said, "Please go back, all of you. This humble cleric can then rest comfortably." The monks refused to retire, for the monk-official had given them this instruction: "Wait upon the Venerable Dad until he retires. Then you may leave." Only after Tripitaka said, "I'm all cared for, please go back," did they dare disperse. The Tang Monk stepped outside the door to relieve himself, and he saw a bright moon high in the sky. "Disciples," he called out, and Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk all came out to wait on him. Moved by the bright, pure light of the moon – a round orb loftily hung to illumine the great Earth – and filled with longing for his homeland, Tripitaka composed orally a long poem in the ancient style. The poem said:

*The bright soul, mirror-like, hangs in the sky, her radiance pervades the whole, vast world: pure light fills jasper towers and jade halls; crisp air swaths an ice tray, a silver pan.  
10000 miles are all made luminous; her beams tonight are this year's brightest – like a cake of frost leaving dark blue sea or an ice-wheel hung on the jade-green sky.  
When 1 guest pines by an inn's cold transoms or an old man sleeps in a mountain lodge, she comes to the Han court to shock grey hair<sup>13</sup> and hastens late makeup, reaching towers of Qin.<sup>14</sup>  
For her Yu Liang's<sup>15</sup> verse for History of Jin and Yuan Hong<sup>16</sup> stays up to sail his river skiff.  
Floating on cup rims she's a cold, weak gleam; lighting the yard, she's brilliant as god.  
By each window one can recite of white snow<sup>17</sup> and press in every house the icy strings.<sup>18</sup>  
Now her pleasure comes to a monastery.  
When'll she join me to return back home?*

When Pilgrim heard these words, he approached him and said, "Master, all you know is that the moonlight fills you with longing for home but you don't understand that the moon may symbolise the rule and regulations of nature's many modes and forms. <sup>19</sup>When the moon reaches the thirtieth day, the metal [phase] in its yang spirit is completely dissolved whereas the water [phase] of its yin soul's filled to the brim of the orb. This is the reason for the designation of that day with the term Obscure<sup>20</sup> for the moon is completely dark and without light. It is at this moment also that the moon copulates with the sun and during the time of the thirtieth day and the first day of the month, it will become pregnant by the light of the sun. By the third day, one [stroke] <sup>21</sup>of the yang will appear, and two [strokes] of the yang will be born by the eighth day. At this time, the moon will have half of its yang spirit in the middle of its yin soul, and its lower half is flat like a rope. That is the reason why the time of the month is called the Upper Bow. By the fifteenth day, all three [strokes] of the yang will be ready and perfect union will be achieved. That is why this time of the month is called To Face.<sup>22</sup> On the sixteenth day, one [stroke] of the yin will be born, and the second stroke will make its appearance on the twenty-second day. At that time half of the yin soul will be in the middle of the yang spirit, and its upper half is flat like a rope. That is the reason why this time of the month is called the Lower Bow. By the thirtieth day, all three [strokes] of the yin will be ready, and the moon has then reached the state of obscurity once more. All this is the symbol of the process of cultivation practiced by nature. If we can nourish the Two Eights<sup>23</sup> until we reach the perfection of Nine Times Nine, <sup>24</sup>then it will be simple for us at that moment to see God, and simple also for us to return to our home. The poem says:

*After the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter and before the Last: medicine well-blended, the outlook's perfect.  
What you acquire from picking, smelt in the stove – determination's fruit's Western Heaven.<sup>25</sup>*

When the elder heard what he said, he was immediately enlightened and understood completely these words of realised mortality. Filled with delight, he thanked Wukong repeatedly. On one side, Sand-monk smiled and said, "Though Elder Brother spoke most appropriately concerning how the first quarter of the moon belonged to the yang and the last quarter belonged to the yin, and how in the midst of yin and in the middle of yang one could obtain the metal of water, he did not mention *water and fire mixed – each to the other drawn – depend on Earth Mum to make this match. Three parties thus fused face no war or strife: <sup>26</sup>water's in Long River, the moon's in the sky.*"

When the elder heard that, his dull mind was again opened up. Thus it was that *truth, grasped by the heart's 1 hole, clears up 1000. Once you solve the riddle of no birth, you're a god.* Then 8 Rules walked up to the elder and tugged at him, saying, "Master, don't listen to all their babblings and delay your sleep. This moon *will soon grow round again after it wanes like me it's born none too perfectly! At meals I'm disliked for too large a maw; I drool too much, they say, on bowls I hold. They've their blessings earned through cleverness; I've affinity stocked by foolishness. I tell you that fetching scriptures will end your three karmic paths. Wagging head and tail you'll go up to Heaven!*"

"All right, Disciples," said Tripitaka, "you must be tired from all this journeying. You may go to sleep first, and let me meditate on this roll of scripture."

"Master, you must be mistaken," said Pilgrim. "You left the family in your youth to become a monk. How could you not be completely familiar with all the scriptures you studied when you're young? Then you received the command from the Tang emperor to go to the Western Heaven and see God for the True Canon of Mahayana. But at this moment, your merit has not been perfected, you've not seen a god, and you've not yet acquired the scriptures. Which roll of scripture do you want to meditate on?" Tripitaka said, "Since I left Chang'an, I've been travelling day and night, and I fear that the scriptures I learned in my youth might slip away from me. Tonight there's a little time, and I want to do some reviewing."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "we'll go to sleep first." The 3 disciples indeed lay down on three of the rattan beds. Closing the door of the Zen hall and turning up the lamp, the elder opened his roll of scripture and began to read and meditate in silence. Truly it was that *first watch struck from a tower, human bustle ceased when fishing-boat fires by wild banks went out.* He left.

**037**

**The ghost king visits Tripitaka Tang at night; Wukong leads the child through wondrous transformation**

Tripitaka sitting in the Chan hall of the Precious Grove Monastery. He meditated for a while beneath the lamps on the *Water Litany of King Liang*<sup>1</sup> and he read for a while the *True Thread of the Peacock*. Not until about the hour of the third watch did he wrap up the scriptures again in his bag. He was just about to get up and walk over to his bed when he heard the weird moan of a strong gust outside the door. Fearing that it might blow out the lamp, he tried hurriedly to shade it with the sleeve of his gown. When he saw the lamp flicker, he began to tremble but at the same time, he was overcome by fatigue and soon dozed off with his head resting on the reading desk. Though his eyes were closed, he still seemed to be half conscious, able to hear all the time the continuous sighing of the dark wind outside his window. What a wind! Truly it *whistled and whiffled – swayed and scattered – whistled and whiffled as fallen leaves flew; swayed and scattered the floating clouds. Heaven's stars and planets were all darkened; the whole Earth's dust and sand were strewn afar. For a while it was fierce and mild. When mild, bamboos and pines beat out their pure rhymes; when fierce, waves of lakes and rivers heaved and churned. It blew till mountain birds grew restless, their voices choked, sea fishes had no peace as they tossed, and turned. Windows and doors fell off in both east and west halls; gods and ghosts glowered in hallways front and back. A god Hall's flower vase was blown to the ground; the oil chalice tumbled and wisdom-lamp grew faint; the incense urn turned over and ashes spilled out; the candlesticks were tilted as flames changed to smoke. Banners, sacred canopies were all awry. Bell-and-drum towers were shaken to the roots!*

In his dream the elder seemed to hear, after the wind had passed, a faint voice outside the Chan hall crying, "Master!" He raised his head in his dream to look and discovered a man standing outside the door who was soaked from head to toe. As tears rolled down from his eyes, he kept calling, "Master!"

Tripitaka rose up and said, "Could you be a goblin, ghost, fiend, or a demon coming to mock me at the depth of night? I'm neither a rapacious nor a wrathful person but rather an honest and upright priest. Having received the imperial decree from the Great Tang in the Land of the East, I'm on my way to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God. I've three disciples under my command, all valiant men able to tame tigers and subdue dragons, heroic warriors capable of repelling demons and extirpating monsters. If they see you, you'll be reduced to powder and dust. Take note, therefore, of my compassionate intent and my mind which knows how to use skilful means.<sup>2</sup> Leave this place, go somewhere far away while there's still time, and don't come up to the door of our Chan hall."

Reclining firmly by the door of the hall, the man said, "Master, we're not a demon or monster, nor are we a goblin or bogie."

"If you're not that kind of a creature," said Tripitaka, "why are you here so late in the night?"

"Open wide your eyes, Master," said the man, "and look at us."

The elder indeed fixed his gaze on his visitor. *Ah! His head had on it a rising-to-Heaven cap; a green-jade belt he tied around his waist. He wore on his body a reddish brown robe with dancing phoenixes and flying dragons; his feet trod on a pair of carefree boots of embroidered cloud pattern; hands held a white jade token adorned with planets and stars. His face seemed the mortal King of Tai Mountain; form was like the civilised Lord Wenchang.*<sup>3</sup>When Tripitaka saw this figure, he paled with fright and hurriedly saluted low before his visitor shouting, "Which dynasty do you belong to, Your Majesty? Please take a seat." He then tried to take hold of his visitor's hands, only to find that he succeeded in grasping nothing but thin air. Spinning around, he sat down and looked: there was the man again. The elder asked once more, "Your Majesty, in what region you're a king? Of what empire you're a ruler? Could it be that there's strife in your kingdom and you're so oppressed by treacherous ministers that you've to flee for your life and arrive here at night? What do you've to say? Please tell me."

Only then did the man as *tears rolled down his cheeks, describe events of old; as sorrow knitted his brow, disclose the former cause.*

"Master," he said, "our home is located due west of here, only about forty miles away where there is a city, the place we founded our kingdom."

"What is its name?" asked Tripitaka. "To tell you the truth," said the man, "when we established our reign, we gave it the name Black Rooster Kingdom."

"Why is it that Your Majesty seems so frightened," said Tripitaka, "and for what reason did you come to this place?" The man replied, "O Master! Five years ago we'd a drought here, so severe that no vegetation could grow and the people were all starving to death. It was dreadful." When Tripitaka heard these words, he nodded and smiled, saying, "Your Majesty, the ancients said, 'When the kingdom is upright, then even the Mind of Heaven is agreeable.' You must not have been treating your subjects with compassion. If there were drought and famine in the land, how could you forsake your domain? You'd have opened up your warehouses in order to bring relief to the people; you'd repent of all the sins you've committed and try to do good henceforth. When you've freed and pardoned those who were unjustly accused and condemned, then the Mind of Heaven will be pacified and the winds and the rains will become timely and auspicious once more."

"The warehouses in my kingdom," said the man, "were all empty and both our revenue and food were exhausted. The salaries for our civil and military officials had to be stopped, and there was not meat in our royal diet. I attempted to imitate the way King Yu conquered the flood, by suffering with our people, by ritual cleansing, maintaining a vegetarian diet, and practicing abstinence. Night and day we offered prayers and incense to Heaven. This went on for three years but all we'd as a result were parched rivers and dried wells. As we reached our most desperate moment, there came to us suddenly from Zhongnan Mountain a Daoist of the Complete Truth Order,<sup>4</sup> who was able to summon the wind and call for rain, to transform rock into gold.<sup>5</sup> He first presented himself to the civil and military officials, and then he met with us. We, of course, invited him to ascend the liturgical platform and offer prayers that were indeed efficacious. As he struck aloud his ritual placard, torrential rain came down in a moment. We thought that three feet of rain would be quite sufficient but he said that since the drought had been so severe for such a long time, he would ask for an extra two inches. When we saw how magnanimous he was, we went through the ceremony of Eight Salutes with him and became bond-brothers."

"This," said Tripitaka, "had to be the greatest joy for Your Majesty."

"What joy was there?" asked the man.

Tripitaka said, "If the Daoist had that kind of abilities, you'd tell him to make rain when you wanted rain, and to make gold when you wanted gold. What need was there that made you leave the city and come here now?"

"Indeed, we became so intimate with him that we shared our food and rest together for two years," said the man, "when it was the time of spring again. As flowers bloomed seductively on the apricot and peach trees, every household in the kingdom was going out to enjoy the lovely scenery. At the time when our officials retired to their residences and our consorts to their chambers, we walked hand-in-hand with the Daoist into the imperial garden. When we came near our well with octagonal marble walls, he threw something in it that emitted myriad shafts of golden light and tricked us into approaching the side of the well to see what sort of treasure was in it. Moved to treachery all at once, he pushed us into the well that he then covered with a slab of stone. He sealed off the entire well with mud and dirt, and he even transplanted a plantain tree on it. Alas, pity us! We've been dead now for three years,<sup>6</sup> a ghost who lost his life in the well and whose wrong has yet to be avenged."

When the Tang Monk heard that the man was in fact a ghost, he turned numb with fear as his hairs stood on end. He had however, no choice but to question his visitor further, saying, "Your Majesty, there is something unreasonable in what you've just said. If you've indeed been dead for three years, how could those civil and military officials, those consorts of three palaces, not miss you and seek you when they had to attend court once every third morning?"

The man said, "Master, when one speaks of the Daoist's abilities, they are truly rare in the world. Since he murdered us, he shook his body once in the garden and transformed himself into an exact image of us. Then and there he took over our empire and usurped our kingdom. Our two divisions of civil and military officials – some four hundred court ministers – and the consorts and ladies of three palaces and six chambers now all belong to him."

"Your Majesty," said Tripitaka, "you're too timid."

"Why timid?" asked the man. Tripitaka said, "Your Majesty, that fiend indeed must have some magic powers in order to change into your form and usurp your kingdom. The civil and military officials might not recognise him, and the consorts might not realise what has happened. But you understand, even though you've died. Why didn't you file suit against him before King Yama in the Region of Darkness? You can at least give an account of the wrongs perpetrated."

"His magic powers are great indeed," said the man, "and he's intimate with most of the divine officials. The city's tutelary guardian drinks with him frequently; the ocean's dragon kings are his relatives; Equal-to-Heaven of the Tai Mountain<sup>7</sup> is his dear friend, and the Ten Kings of Hell happen to be his bond-brothers. That's why we've no place to go even to file suit."

Tripitaka said, "Your Majesty, if you can't bring suit against him in the Region of Darkness, why do you come here to the World of Light?"

"O Master," said the man, "you think that this slip of a wronged soul would dare approach your gate? Before this monastery you've the various tutelary deities, the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of Light, the Guardians of Five Quarters, the Four Sentinels, and the Eighteen Guardians of the Faith, all of them closely watching over you and your horse. Just now it was the Night Patrol God who brought us in here with a gust of divine wind. He said that our water ordeal of three years is now fulfilled, and that we'd come to seek an audience with you. He told us that you've under your command a senior disciple, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who is able to slay fiends and subdue demons. We've come with all sincerity to plead with you. We beseech you to go to our kingdom and seize the demon, so that the true and the deviate can properly be distinguished. To repay the kindness of Master, we'll imitate those who express their gratitude by weaving grass ropes or holding bracelets in the mouth."<sup>8</sup>

"Your Majesty," said Tripitaka, "so you came here to ask my disciple to get rid of those monsters for you?"

"Exactly! Exactly!" said the man. Tripitaka said, "My disciple may not be good in doing something else but if you ask him to subdue demons and catch fiends, the work will suit him to a tee. But Your Majesty, though you may order him to seize the monster, I fear that he may find it difficult to carry out."

"Why should it be difficult?" asked the man.

Tripitaka replied, "If that fiend indeed possesses such great magic powers that he has managed to transform himself into an exact image of you, then it will mean also that all the civil and military officials of the court and all your consorts have been nothing but friendly and amiable toward him. Though my disciple may be able, he would not engage in warfare recklessly. For if we're caught by the officials who should accuse us of plotting against the kingdom and charge us with the crime of treason, we'd be imprisoned in your city. Wouldn't our efforts then be like the failed attempt of drawing a tiger or carving a heron and turning it into another creature?"<sup>9</sup>

"I still have someone in the city," said the man. Tripitaka said, "That's good, that's good! He must be, I suppose, a hereditary prince of the first order, dispatched to a command post somewhere."

"No," said the man, "I've in the palace a prince, an heir apparent of my own begetting."

"Has the prince been banished by the demon?" asked Tripitaka. "Not yet," said the man, "but he has been asked to remain in the Hall of Golden Chimes, either to discuss the classic texts with one of the secretaries, or to sit on the throne with the Daoist. For these three years, the prince was forbidden to enter the palace and unable to see his mum." Tripitaka asked, "For what reason?" The man said, "This was a plan of that fiend, for he feared that if mum and son had a chance to meet, their casual conversations might lead them to discover the truth."

"Though your ordeal no doubt has been preordained of Heaven," said Tripitaka, "it is nonetheless similar to what I'd to undergo. Long ago my dad was killed by a pirate who also took my mum by force. After three months, she gave birth to me, and I escaped with my life in the waters. It was my good fortune that a gracious master at the Gold Mountain Monastery reared me till I was grown. Come to think of it, *I'd neither dad nor mum when I was young and the prince at this place's lost his parents*. How pitiful indeed! But let me ask you, though you may have a prince still in court, how can I possibly get to meet him?"

"Why not?" asked the man. Tripitaka said, "He's now guarded by the demon, and he cannot even see his own mum. I'm only a monk. For what reason would I be able to have an audience with him?"

The man said, "But he is leaving the court tomorrow."

"What for?" asked Tripitaka. The man said, "During the time of the early court tomorrow, the prince plans to lead three thousand men and horses, together with falcons and dogs, to go hunting outside the city. Master will certainly have a chance to meet him; when you do and if you're willing to tell him what I told you, he will believe you."

"He's of fleshly eyes and mortal stock," said Tripitaka. "Having been deceived by the demon into remaining in the hall, was there a day when he did not address the spurious ruler as dad king? How could he possibly believe my words?"

"If you're afraid that he'll not believe you," said the man, "we'll leave with you a sign to indicate that you're telling the truth."

"What kind of sign?" asked Tripitaka. The man put down the white jade token inlaid with gold he had in his hands and said, "This thing can be a sign."

"What's the significance of this thing?" asked Tripitaka. The man said, "After the Daoist had changed into our form, all he lacked was this treasure. When he entered the palace, he claimed that the rain-making Daoist had robbed him of this jade token that for three years now he had not been able to recover. If our prince sees it, the sight of the thing will remind him of its true owner, and our wrongs will be avenged."

"All right," said Tripitaka, "let me have it, and I'll ask my disciple to take care of you. Will you wait here?"

"We dare not," said the man. "We plan to ask the Night Patrol God to use another gust of divine wind and send us into the inner palace where we'll appear in a dream to our true queen of the central palace. We want to make certain that mum and son will be of one mind with all of you." Tripitaka nodded in agreement and said, "Please go."

The wronged soul saluted to take leave of Tripitaka who was trying to walk outside to send him off. Somehow he tripped and fell, and when Tripitaka woke up with a start, it was all a dream. As he faced the dim, flickering lamp in fear, he cried repeatedly, "Disciples! Disciples!"

"What's all this hollering for the local spirit?"<sup>10</sup> mumbled 8 Rules, beginning to stir. "I used to be a man of might dedicated to passing my days by devouring humans, and I loved the taste of blood and meat. What enjoyment! You've to leave the family and ask us to protect you on a journey. I thought I was to be a monk but in fact I'm a slave! During the day I've to pole the luggage and lead the horse while at night, I've to carry the night pot and smell someone's stinky feet by sharing his bed. And even at this hour, you're not asleep! What are you calling disciples for?"

"Disciples," said Tripitaka, "just now I fell asleep on the table and had a weird dream." Leaping up all at once, Pilgrim said, "Dreams arise from your thoughts. Before you ascended a mountain, you're afraid of monsters already. You worried over the distance to Thunderclap that you've yet to reach; you also thought of Chang'an and wondered when you'd be able to return. When your mind is restless, you've many dreams. But look at old monkey! With true single-mindedness I seek to see God in the West, and that's why I don't have even the tiniest dream!"

Tripitaka said, "Disciple, this dream of mine is not a homesick dream. When I closed my eyes just now, a violent gust of wind brought into my view a king standing outside the door of our chamber. He said that he was the ruler of the Black Rooster Kingdom but his whole body was dripping wet and he was weeping." He then proceeded to give a thorough account of their conversation in the dream to Pilgrim. "No need to say anything more," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "If he appears in this dream of yours to you, he's plainly trying to take care of old monkey by giving me some business. There must be a fiend there trying to usurp the throne and seize the kingdom. Let me distinguish the true from the false for those people. When my rod reaches that place, success is assured."

"But disciple," said Tripitaka, "he said that the fiend has great magic power."

"Don't be afraid of whatever greatness he has!" said Pilgrim. "Just remember that when old monkey arrives, he'll have no place to run."

Tripitaka said, "I also remember that he left us something as a sign."

"Master, don't fool around," said 8 Rules. "It's just a dream. Why keep up this chit-chat?"

Sand-monk said, "As the saying goes, *don't believe the honesty of the honest; guard against the unkindness of the kind*. Let's fetch some torches and open our door, then we can see what's happened."

Pilgrim indeed opened the door, and as they looked together, they saw in the light of the stars and moon there was truly a white jade token inlaid with gold placed on the steps. 8 Rules walked forward and picked it up, saying, "Elder Brother, what is this?"

"This is a treasure usually held by a king," said Pilgrim, "and it's called a jade token. Master, since we do have such a thing, the matter of your dream has to be true. You can depend entirely on old monkey for catching the fiend tomorrow. But I want you to face three unlucky things."

"Fine! Fine! Fine!" said 8 Rules. "It's enough to have a dream. You've to tell him about it, too! Since when has this fellow failed to play tricks on people? Now he wants you to face three unlucky things."

As he walked back inside, Tripitaka asked, "What three things?"

Pilgrim said, "Tomorrow I want you to take the blame, take abuse, and catch the plague."

"Just one of these is bad enough," said 8 Rules, laughing. "How could one bear all three of them?"

The Tang Monk, after all, was an intelligent elder. He therefore asked, "Disciple, can you tell me more about what these three things involve?"

"No need to tell you," said Pilgrim, "but first let me give you these two objects."

Dear Great Sage! Pulling off one of his hairs, he blew on it a mouthful of divine breath and cried, "Change!" It changed instantly into a red lacquered box plated in gold. After he placed the white jade token inside the box, he said, "Master, in the morning, you'd hold this thing in your hands and put on your brocade cassock. Then go sit in the main hall and recite some *Threads*. Let me go first to the city to have a look; if there is indeed a fiend, I'll slay him so that we can achieve some merit at this place. But if there is no fiend, we ought not to incur calamity on ourselves."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said Tripitaka. Pilgrim said, "If the prince doesn't leave the city, then there may not be much that I can do. But if he indeed comes out of the city in accordance with your dream, I'll certainly bring him here to see you."

"What shall I say to him when I see him?" asked Tripitaka. Pilgrim replied, "When he arrives, let me first come in and announce him. You can then pull the cover of the box open slightly, and I'll change into a tiny monk about two inches tall so that I, too, can be placed inside the box. You can hold the whole thing in your hands. When the prince enters the monastery, he will most certainly want to pay homage to God. Let him salute all he wants but you pay him no attention. When he sees that you don't even rise before him, he will surely order you seized. Let him do that – in fact, let him beat you, tie you up, or execute you."

"Hey!" said Tripitaka. "He's capable of issuing a high military order. If he truly wants to have me executed, what'll I do?"

"No fear, for I'm around," said Pilgrim. "When you get to the crucial moment, I'll be there to protect you. If he asks who you're, you can identify yourself as a monk sent by imperial decree from the Land of the East to present treasures to God and acquire scriptures from him in the Western Heaven. If he asks what sort of treasure you've, you can tell him about the brocade cassock of yours. Say to him however, that it's only a third-class treasure and you've in your possession good things that belong to the first and second classes. When he asks you some more, you can then tell him that there's a treasure in this box that's knowledge of the past five centuries, the present five centuries, and the future five centuries. Overall, this treasure's complete knowledge of the events of past and future for a period of fifteen centuries. Let old monkey come out then and I'll tell the prince what you heard in your dream. If he believes me, I'll go catch the demon so that his dad king may be avenged and our reputation may be established at this place. If he doesn't believe me, we can then show him the white jade token. I fear that he might be a bit young even to recognise the token."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he was very pleased, saying, "O Disciple, this is a most marvellous plan! But talk about these treasures, one will be called brocade cassock and the other white jade token. What'll be the name of that treasure you'll change into?"

"Let's call him King-Making Thing," said Pilgrim. Tripitaka agreed and kept these words in his heart. That whole night master and disciples did not, of course, have any sleep. Impatiently waiting for the dawn, they wish they could *by nodding their heads call forth the eastern sun and with 1 breath disperse all Heaven's stars*. In a little while, the eastern sky paled with light. Pilgrim thereupon gave the following instruction to 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "Don't disturb the monks, so that they'll not be milling about in the monastery. When I've accomplished what I must do, then we'll journey again." He took leave of them and somersaulted at once into the air. Opening wide his fiery eyes to look toward the West, he discovered that there was indeed a city. He could see it so readily because the fact of the matter was that the city, as we told you before, was only 40 miles away. So, the moment Pilgrim rose into the air, he saw it immediately. As Pilgrim drew near the city and stared at it carefully, he saw that it was shrouded by unending layers of eerie mists and battered by constant gusts of demonic wind. Sighing to himself in the air, Pilgrim said, *"If a true king ascends his precious throne, auspicious light and clouds will this place enfold. Since a fiend has usurped the dragon seat, rising black mist seals up the doors of gold."* He was thus speaking to himself when he heard the loud booms of cannons. As the eastern gate swung open, a troop of men and horses appeared, indeed a hunting corps most fearsome in appearance. See them: *leaving the capital at dawn, they go to hunt on the meadow. Bright banners unfurl in the sun; white stallions race against the wind. The lizard-skin drums keep rolling as tasselled lances strike in pairs. The falconers are ferocious and whippers-in both mean and strong. Fire cannons rattle the heavens and birdlime poles glow in the sun. Each one props up his arrows; every man wears his carved bows. Spreading their nets beneath the slope, they pull taut the ropes in the paths. At one crack like a thunderclap, 1000 steeds charge leopards and bears. Tricky hares cannot save their lives; wily deer are at their wits' end; foxes are fated to expire; antelopes perish in the midst. If pheasants can't fly to escape, could wild fowls find refuge from harm? All of them ransack the mountain range to capture wild beasts and cut down the forest to shoot at flying things!* After those people had come out of the city, they spread out in the countryside toward the east, and in a little while they reached the rice fields on the highland some 20 miles away. In the midst of the troops there was a young warrior who wore a helmet and a cuirass; a cummerbund too, of 18 layers. His hands held a treasure sword of blue steel and he rode a brown warhorse. A fully strung bow also hung from his waist. Truly *he seemed faintly like a king, a ruler with noble looks. His features were not uncouth: like a true dragon he moved*. Secretly pleased in the air, Pilgrim said to himself, "That one's to be the crown prince. Let me tease him a little." *Dear Great Sage!* He lowered his cloud and darted straight into the army of the prince. Shaking his body once, he changed instantly into a little white rabbit, scampering about before the prince's horse. When the prince saw it, he could not have been more delighted. Pulling out an arrow, he stretched his bow to the fullest and shot the rabbit squarely with it. The Great Sage, of course, had made it possible for the prince to hit him; being quick of hand and eye, he actually had caught the arrow. After dropping some of the arrow's feathers on the ground, he turned and sped away. When the prince saw the arrow had found its mark on the rabbit, he urged his horse on to give chase all by himself. He did not realise that he was being led away deliberately: when the horse galloped, Pilgrim ran like the wind but when the horse slowed down, Pilgrim also took up a more leisurely pace just to stay slightly ahead of him. Mile after mile it went on like this, until the prince was lured right up to the gate of the Precious Grove Monastery. Changing back into his true form (the rabbit thus disappeared and only the hawk-feathered arrow was stuck on the doorpost), Pilgrim raced inside yelling to the Tang Monk, "Master, he's here, he's here!"

He changed again, this time into a tiny monk about 2 inches tall and crawled at once into the red box. The prince chased his prey right up to the monastery gate; he could not find the white rabbit but he saw an eagle-plumed arrow stuck on the doorpost. Greatly startled and turning pale, the prince said, "Strange! Strange! I clearly shot the white rabbit with my arrow. How could the rabbit disappear, and only the arrow be seen here? It must be that after years and months, the rabbit has turned into a spirit." He pulled out the arrow and raised his head to look: there on top of the gate of the monastery were written seven words in large characters, "Precious Grove Monastery Built by Imperial Command."

"Now I know," said the prince. "Years ago my dad king, I recall, did send some officials from the Hall of Golden Chimes to take some gold here so that the monks could redecorate the images and the halls. I didn't expect that I'd be here today. Truly *there in a bamboo-shaded walk with a good monk I fell to talk. So in this tedious mortal round one afternoon of peace I found.* '1'Let me go inside for a walk."

Leaping down from the horse, the prince was about to enter the monastery, when those three thousand men and horses who were accompanying him also arrived. As they crowded into the monastery, the resident monks hurriedly came respecting to receive them into the main hall so that they could pay homage to the images of God. Afterwards, they raised their eyes to look about, intending to tour the corridors and enjoy the scenery, when they suddenly discovered that there was a monk sitting right in the middle of the hall. Becoming enraged at once, the prince said, "This monk is terribly rude! Half a throne of this dynasty has entered this monastery. Though I've issued no decree for this visit so that he has been spared from meeting us at a great distance, he should now at least get up when soldiers and horses are at the door. How dare he sit there unmoved? Seize him!"

He said "Seize," and the guards on both sides immediately attempted to catch hold of the Tang Monk so that they could bind him with ropes. Sitting in the box, Pilgrim recited in silence a spell, saying, "You various Guardians of the Faith, the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of Light, I'm drawing up a plan to subdue a fiend. This prince, ignorant of the matter, is about to have my master bound with ropes. All of you must protect him. If he's really bound, you all will be found guilty." When the Great Sage gave such an order in secret who would dare disobey him! The deities indeed gave protection to Tripitaka in such a way that those people could not even touch his bald head. It was as if a brick wall had come between them, so that they could not approach him at all.

"Where did you come from, monk," said the prince, "that you dare use this magic of body concealment to mock me?" Tripitaka walked up to him instead and saluted him, saying, "This poor monk does not know any magic of body concealment. I'm the Tang Monk from the Land of the East, a priest going to present treasures to God and to acquire scriptures from him in the Western Heaven." The prince said, "Though your Land of the East is actually the central plains, it is incomparably poor. What kind of treasures do you've? You tell me!"

"The cassock I've on my body's a," said Tripitaka, "treasure of the third class. But I've in addition those of the first and second classes as well and they're even better things."

"That garment of yours," said the prince, "covers only one side of your body while your arm sticks out on the other side. How much it'd be worth that you dare call it a treasure?"

Tripitaka said, "Though this cassock doesn't completely cover the body, I've several lines of a poem that'll reveal its excellence. The poem says:

*A god's gown's a half robe, there's no need to say. It hides within the Real, free of worldly dust.  
Countless threads and stitches perfect this right fruit; 8 treasures and 9 pearls fuse with the primal soul.  
Maidens divine did make it reverently to give to a monk to cleanse his sullied frame.  
It's all right to see but not to greet the Throne. But you've lived in vain, your dad's wrong unrequited!"*

When the prince heard these words, he grew very angry saying, "This brazen Chan monk's talking rubbish! Your clever mouth and slippery tongue may boast all you'll of that half a piece of garment. But since when've I not requited my dad's wrong? You tell me."

Taking a step forward, Tripitaka folded his hands and said, "Your Highness, how many favours does a man receive as he lives in this world?"

"Four favours," said the prince.

"Which four?" Tripitaka asked.

"The favour of shelter and support provided by Heaven and Earth," said the prince, "the favour of the luminous presence of the sun and the moon, the favour of provisions from the ruler, his land, and the favour of his parents' breeding and nurture."

With a smile, Tripitaka said, "The words of Your Highness aren't quite right. A man's only the shelter, support of Heaven, Earth, the luminous presence of the sun and the moon, and the provisions from the land of his king. Where does he get his parent's breeding and nurture?"

"This monk's," said the prince angrily, "an idle and ungrateful man who shaves his hair only to commit treason! If a man has no parental breeding and nurture where does his body come from?"

"Your Highness," said Tripitaka, "this humble monk doesn't know the answer but inside this red box's a treasure called the King-Making Thing. He's knowledge of events of the past five centuries, the present five centuries, and the future five centuries. Overall, he knows completely the events of past and future for a period of fifteen centuries and that there's no such favour of parental breeding and nurture. It's he who's ordered your poor monk to wait here for you for a long time."

Hearing this, the prince gave the order, "Bring him here for me to see." Tripitaka pulled open the box's cover; Pilgrim leaped out and began to hobble all over the place. The prince said, "This little midget! What can he know?"

When Pilgrim heard this remark about his size, he at once resorted to magic. Straightening up his torso, he grew about 3.5 feet instantly. "If he can grow that rapidly," said the soldiers, highly startled, "it'll only be a few days before he pierces the sky."

When Pilgrim reached his normal height however, he stopped growing. Then the prince asked him, "King-Making Thing, this old monk claims that you've the knowledge of past, future, good, and evil. Do you divine by the tortoise shell and the stalks of plants or do you use books to determine human fortunes?"

"None of these," said Pilgrim, "for *I need my three-inch tongue solely when I know all things completely.*"

"This fellow, too, is babbling!" said the prince. "Since the time of antiquity, the book, *Classic of Change* of the Zhou dynasty, has proved to be supremely marvellous in determining throughout the world good and evil for man to seek or avoid. Therefore tortoise shells or plant stalks are used for divination. But if one relies solely on your words, what evidence is there? Your empty words on luck or misfortune can only vex the minds of people."

Pilgrim said, "Please do not be hasty, Your Highness. You're actually a prince begotten of the King of the Black Rooster Kingdom. Five years ago, you had a severe drought here and all the people were in such great suffering that your king and his subjects had to offer fervent prayers. Though not a drop of rain came, a Daoist arrived from the Zhongnan Mountain who was an expert in summoning wind and rain and in transforming stone into gold. The king was so fond of him that he became his sworn brother. Is all this true?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the prince. "Say some more."

Pilgrim said, "After three years, the Daoist disappeared and who is he now who uses the royal we?"

The prince said, "There was indeed a Daoist with whom dad king swore to be his brother. In fact, they ate together and rested together. Three years ago when they were enjoying the sights of the imperial garden, the Daoist used a gust of magic wind and transported back to Zhongnan Mountain the gold inlaid white jade token that dad king had in his hands. Even now however, dad king still misses him, and because of his absence, has closed down the garden for three years. But who is now ruling, if not my dad king?" When Pilgrim heard these words, he began to snicker. The prince asked him again but instead of replying, he only continued to snicker some more. "Why don't you speak when you'd?" said the prince angrily. "Why do you snicker like that?"

"I still have plenty to say," said Pilgrim, "but there are so many people around and it's not convenient for me to speak up."

When the prince saw that there might be some reason for such a statement, he waved his sleeve once to dismiss the soldiers. The captain of the guards immediately gave the order to have the three thousand men and horses stationed outside the monastery gate. The hall was thus nearly emptied of people with only the prince sitting in the middle, the elder standing before him, and Pilgrim to his left. After even the resident monks retired, then Pilgrim went forward and said to him soberly, "Your Highness, the one who left with the wind is actually your true dad but the one who occupies the throne now is the Daoist who made rain."

"Nonsense! Nonsense!" said the prince. "Since the departure of the Daoist, my dad has governed so well that the wind and rain are seasonal, the country is prosperous, and the people are secure. But if what you say is true, then the present ruler is not my dad king. It's a good thing that I'm young and I can be somewhat tolerant. If my dad king hears such treasonous words from you, he will have you seized and hewn to pieces." He dismissed Pilgrim with a snort. Turning to the Tang Monk, Pilgrim said, "You see? I said that he wouldn't believe me, and indeed he does not. Take the treasure now and present it to him. After certifying our rescript, we can proceed to the Western Heaven." Tripitaka handed the red box over to Pilgrim who having received it, shook his body and the box disappeared. It was actually the transformation of his hair that was retrieved by him. With both hands, Pilgrim presented the white jade token to the prince.

When he saw the object, the prince shouted, “What a monk! What a monk! You’re the Daoist of five years ago who came to cheat our household of this treasure. Now you’re disguised as a monk to present it back to us? Seize him!” When he shouted the order like that, the elder was so frightened that he pointed at Pilgrim and said, “You Ban-Horse-Plague! You’ve a special knack for causing trouble and bringing calamity on me!”

“Don’t shout!” said Pilgrim, walking up to the prince to stop him. “Don’t let this thing leak out. I’m not called King-Making Thing, for I’ve a real name.”

“You come up here!” said the prince angrily. “Answer me with your real name so that I can send you to the bureau of justice to sentence you.”

Pilgrim said, “I’m the senior disciple of this elder, and my name is Wukong Pilgrim Sun. Because my master and I were on our way to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven, we arrived last night and found lodging here. My master was reading the *Threads* in the night, and at about the hour of the third watch, he dreamed that your dad appeared to him. Your dad claimed that he was harmed by that Daoist who pushed him into the octagonal well with the marble wall in the imperial garden. The Daoist changed into the form of your dad, and this was not known to any of the court officials nor to you since you’re so young. You’re forbidden to enter the inner palace, and the garden was shut down so that the truth could not be discovered, I suppose. Your dad king came especially in the night to ask me to subdue this demon. At first, I was afraid that the murderer was not a demon but when I surveyed the city in mid-air, I’d see that there was a monster-spirit all right. I was about to seize him when you came out of the city to hunt. The white rabbit that you shot with your arrow happened to be this old monkey who led you here to the monastery to see my master. Every word that we’ve said to you is the truth. If you’d recognise this white jade token, how could you possibly not think of your dad’s care and love and seek vengeance for him?”

When the prince heard these words, he became grief stricken, thinking to himself sorrowfully, “Even if I don’t believe him, his words seem to have at least thirty percent truth. But if I believe him, how could I face the dad king now in the palace?”

This is what is called *to advance or retreat is hard so the mind asks the mouth; to think thrice, to have patience – as the mouth asks the mind*. When Pilgrim saw how perplexed he was, he said again, “Your Highness, there’s no need for perplexity. Let Your Highness return to your kingdom and make inquiry of your queen mum. Ask her whether the feelings between her and her husband are the same as three years before. Just this one question will reveal the truth.”

Persuaded by this, the prince said, “Yes, let me go and inquire of my mum.”

Leaping up, he took hold of the white jade token and wanted to leave. Pilgrim however, tugged at him, saying, “If all these men and horses of yours return with you, someone’s bound to leak out info and it’ll be hard for me to succeed. You must therefore go back alone and don’t make a show of yourself. Don’t go through the Central Gate of the Sun but enter the palace through the Rear Gate of the Servants. When you get to see your mum in the palace, you must remember not to speak loftily or loudly; you must speak quietly and in a subdued manner. For I fear that the fiend’s great magic powers and if he ever gets wind of the news, it’ll be difficult to preserve the lives of you and your mum.”

The prince obeyed this instruction; walking out the door, he gave this order to the officers; “Stay and camp here. Don’t move. I’ve something to attend to. We’ll go back to the city together when I return.” *Look at him!* He gave his troops the order to pitch their camp and sped to his city on flying horse.

038

***The child queries his mum to learn of deviancy and truth; metal and Wood reaching the deep, see the false and the real***

*I meet you to speak just on the cause of birth that’ll make you one of God’s assembly.*

*1 calm thought sees Him in this realm of dust; the whole world watches a god who subdues.*

*If you’d know today’s true, enlightened lord, you must ask your mum of former years.*

*There’s another world you’ve never seen for each step in life may bring something new.*

The prince of the Black Rooster Kingdom who after he took leave of the Great Sage soon returned to his city. Indeed, he did not approach the gate of the court, nor did he dare announce his arrival. Going instead to the Rear Gate of the Servants, he found that it was guarded by several eunuchs. When they saw the prince approaching however, they dared not stop him and let him pass. Dear prince! Pressing his horse, he galloped inside and went straight up to the Brocade Fragrance Pavilion, in which the queen was seated with scores of palace maidens waving their fans on both sides. The queen however, was reclining on the carved railings of the pavilion and shedding tears. Why was she shedding tears, you ask? For at the hour of the fourth watch she too had a dream but she could remember only half of it. She was trying very hard to recall the other half when the prince dismounted and knelt beneath the pavilion, saying, “Mum!” Forcing herself to appear delighted, the queen cried out, “Son, what joy! What joy! For these two or three years, you’ve been staying in the front palace to study with your dad king and I’ve not been able to see you. How I’ve thought of you! How is it that you’ve the leisure today to come see me instead? This is truly my greatest joy, my greatest joy! O son, why do you sound so sad? Your dad king, after all, is getting on in his years. There will be a day when the dragon returns to the jade-green sea and the phoenix will go back to the scarlet heavens. You’ll then inherit the throne. What could there possibly be to make you unhappy?”

The prince respected before he said, “Mum, permit me to ask you: who is he that is on the throne now? Who is the man who uses the royal ‘we’?” When the queen heard this, she said, “This child has gone mad! The one who is ruling is your dad king. Why do you ask such questions?” Again respecting, the prince said, “I beseech my mum to grant her son a pardon first. Only then would I dare present a further question. If you don’t, I’ll dare not ask.”

“Between mum and son,” said the queen, “how could there be any criminal offence? Of course I’ll pardon you. Speak up, quickly!” The prince said, “Let me ask you this: are your relations with your husband just as warm and intimate as three years before?”

When the queen heard this question, her spirit left her and her soul fled. She dashed out of the pavilion and embraced the prince tightly as tears fell from her eyes. “My child,” she said, “I’ve not seen you for such a long time. Why do you come to the palace today and ask this question?”

“Mum,” said the prince, becoming irritated. “If you’ve something to say, say it. If you don’t speak up, you might jeopardise a very important affair.”

Only then did the queen dismiss all her attendants and spoke, quietly weeping. “If you didn’t ask me this matter, son, it’d have never come to light even when I reached the Nine Springs<sup>1</sup> down below. Since you’ve asked me, listen to what I’ve to say: three years ago he’s loving and warm; for three years now he’s been cold as ice. By the pillows I’ve pressed him long and hard; he said, *I’m old, frail, and can’t make that something rise!*”

When the prince heard these words, he at once struggled free and mounted his horse once more. Clutching at him desperately, the queen said, “Child, what’re you doing? Why do you leave before we finish speaking?” Again the prince knelt on the ground and said, “Mum, I dare not speak, though I must! During the time of the early court this morning, I went out by imperial decree to hunt with falcons and dogs. By chance I met a holy monk sent by the Throne in the Land of the East to fetch scriptures. He has under him a senior disciple by the name of Pilgrim Sun who is an expert in the subjugation of fiends. I was told that my real dad king had been murdered in the imperial garden; he died in fact in the well with the octagonal marble walls. It was the Daoist who falsely changed into the form of dad king and usurped his dragon seat. Last night, dad king appeared to the monk in a dream and asked him to send his disciple to the city to catch this fiend. Your child did not dare believe them completely and that was why I came specially to question you. Now that mum has spoken like this, I know that there must be a monster-spirit here.”

“O son,” said the queen, “how could you take the words of some stranger outside as the truth?” The prince said, “I didn’t but dad king left them a sign.” When the queen asked what sort of sign it was, the prince took out that white jade token inlaid with gold and handed it to her. Recognising at once it was a treasure that had belonged to the king, the queen could not hold back the torrents of tears. “My lord!” she cried. “How could you not come to see me first, if you had been dead for three years? How could you go to see the sage monk first, and then the prince afterwards?”

“Mum,” said the prince, “what are you saying?” The queen said, “My child, I also had a dream last night at about the hour of the fourth watch. I dreamed that your dad king stood before me dripping wet, and he told me himself that he was dead. His spirit, he said, had gone to plead with the Tang Monk to subdue the specious king and to save his former body. I clearly recall these words but there is another half of the dream which I just cannot remember. I was speculating just now by myself when you arrived with your questions and this treasure. Let me put away the jade token for the moment. You’d go and ask the sage monk to do what he must do quickly, so that the demonic miasma may be dispelled and the perverse and true can be distinguished. That’s the way you can repay your dad king’s kindness in rearing you.”

Swiftly mounting his horse, the prince went out of the Rear Gate of the Servants and slipped away from the city. Truly *holding back his tears, he respected to leave the queen; in grief he went to salute again to the Tang Monk*. In a little while, he was out of the city gate and went straight to the gate of the Precious Grove Monastery where he dismounted. As the soldiers came to receive him, the sun began to set. The prince gave the order for the soldiers to remain where they were stationed. Again by himself, he walked inside after straightening out his clothes to solicit Pilgrim’s assistance.

Just then the Monkey King swaggered out from the main hall, and the prince at once went to his knees, saying, “Master, I’ve returned.” Pilgrim went forward to raise him, saying, “Please rise. Did you ask anyone when you reached the city?”

“I did,” said the prince, and he gave a complete account of the conversation with his mum. Smiling gently, Pilgrim said, “If he is that cold, he must be the transformation of some kind of coldblooded creature. Don’t worry! Don’t worry! Let old monkey get rid of him for you. But it’s getting late now, and I can’t move. You go back first, and I’ll arrive tomorrow morning.” Respecting repeatedly, the prince said, “Master, I’ll stay here to wait upon you until tomorrow, and then I can travel with you.”

“That’s no good,” said Pilgrim. “If we enter the city together, the fiend would become suspicious; instead of a chance meeting, he’ll think that you’ve gone somewhere especially to fetch me. The whole arrangement will make him blame you, will it not?”

“Even if I go back now,” said the prince, “he will still blame me.”

“Why?” asked Pilgrim. The prince said, “I was commanded during the early court to lead this number of men and horses, of falcons and dogs, to leave the city. But when I go back today, I’ve no game to present to the throne. If he accuses me of being incapable and has me jailed in Youli,<sup>2</sup> whom would you rely on when you enter the city in the morning? There is no one, after all, in the ranks who knows about this.”

“That’s nothing!” said Pilgrim. “You’d have told me earlier about this, and I’d have found some game.” Dear Great Sage! Look at the way he shows off before the prince! With a bound he leaped straight up to the clouds, made the magic sign, and recited the spell, Let Om and *Ram* purify the Religion-realm that summoned a mountain god and a local spirit. They arrived and saluted to him in mid-air, saying, “Great Sage, what is your wish when you command these humble deities to appear?” Pilgrim said, “Old monkey arrives here in the company of the Tang Monk, and he now intends to catch a wicked demon. Unfortunately, the prince did not catch any game during the hunt and he dared not return to the court. I’m, therefore, going to ask you for a small favour. Please find for us some fallow deer, antelopes, wild hares, and fowls – a few pieces of each kind – so that we can send him off.” Not daring to disobey when they heard this instruction, the mountain god and the local spirit inquired as to how many heads of wild game were needed. “It doesn’t matter,” said the Great Sage, “just bring us some.” The two deities, leading the demon soldiers under their command, called up a strong gust of dark wind to round up the wild animals. They caught some grouse and pheasants; horned deer and fat fallow deer; foxes, badgers, and hares; tigers, leopards, and wolves – overall, several hundred of these which they brought before Pilgrim. Pilgrim said, “Old monkey has no need of these. Pull out their leg tendons and place them on both sides of the forty-mile road leading back to the city. Those people will then be able to take them back without having to use falcons and dogs, and this will be counted as your merit.” The deities obeyed; calming the dark wind, they placed the game beside the road.

Pilgrim dropped down from the clouds and said to the prince, “Your Highness, please go back. There is game on the road that you may collect.” After having seen the kind of power Pilgrim displayed on top of the clouds, the prince had no doubts whatever. He respected to take leave of Pilgrim before walking out of the monastery gate to order the soldiers to return to the city. As they journeyed, they found indeed a large number of wild game laid out on both sides of the road. Without releasing falcons and dogs, the soldiers caught them by merely lifting their hands. All of them, therefore, shouted bravos and congratulated the prince, saying that it was his great luck that brought them the game but not knowing, of course, that it was the might of old monkey. Listen to their poems of triumph as they proceeded back to the city!

Pilgrim, meanwhile, returned to protect Tripitaka. When those monks in the monastery saw how intimate the pilgrims had become with the prince, how could they dare not be reverent? They again prepared a vegetarian meal to serve to the Tang Monk who then rested once more in the Zen hall. By about the hour of the first watch, Pilgrim who had something on his mind, was unable to fall asleep. Rolling off his bed, he dashed up to the Tang Monk and cried, “Master.” The elder at this time actually was not yet asleep but knowing that Pilgrim could be rather restless and frenetic, he pretended that he was and did not respond. Pilgrim caught hold of his bald head and started to shake it violently, crying, “Master, how is it that you’re already asleep?”

“You rascal!” said the Tang Monk, growing angry. “You’re not going to sleep at this hour? What are you clamouring for?”

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “I’ve a little matter that I want to discuss with you.”

“What matter?” asked the elder.

Pilgrim said, “During the day I boasted to the prince that my abilities were higher than a mountain and greater than an ocean. To catch that monster-spirit, I said, was as easy as reaching for something in my pocket – all I’d to do was to stretch forth my hand and take it. Now I can’t sleep, and when I think about the matter, I find that there’s some difficulty.”

“If you say that it’s going to be difficult,” said the Tang Monk, “then let’s not try to catch him.”

“We still have to,” said Pilgrim, “but we can’t justify our action.” The Tang Monk said, “This ape is babbling again! The monster-spirit has usurped the throne of a ruler. What do you mean that we can’t justify our action?”



Pilgrim said, “Your venerable self only knows how to recite *Threads* and worship God, how to sit and meditate. Since when have you ever seen the legal codes established by Xiao He?<sup>3</sup> The proverb says, ‘If you arrest a thief, you must seize him with the stolen goods.’ That fiend has been a king for three years but he has not permitted his secret to leak out in any way. He has slept with the ladies of the three palaces, and he has ruled amiably with his two rows of civil and military officials. Even if old monkey has the ability to arrest him, it will not be easy to convict him of his crime.”

“Why not?” asked the Tang Monk. Pilgrim said, “Even if he is a mouth-less gourd, he will have a row with you for a while. Can’t you hear him? ‘I’m the king of the Black Rooster Kingdom. What offence against Heaven have I committed that you dare come to arrest me?’ What evidence do I’ve with which I can argue with him?”

“What do you plan to do, then?” said the Tang Monk.

With a chuckle, Pilgrim said, “The plan of old monkey is already made but one obstacle I’ve to face right now is that you, Dear Sir, have a tendency to dote on people.”

“What do you mean?” asked the Tang Monk. Pilgrim said, “Eight Rules is rather stupid but you’re somewhat partial to him.”

“How am I partial to him?” asked the Tang Monk. “If you’re not,” said Pilgrim, “then you’d try to be more courageous and stay here with Sand-monk. Let old monkey and 8 Rules take this opportunity now to go into the Black Rooster Kingdom first and find the imperial garden. We’ll break open the marble well and fish out the corpse of the true king that we’ll wrap in our bags. When we enter the city tomorrow, we’ll not bother with having our rescript certified; as soon as we see the fiend, I’ll attack him with my rod. If he has anything to say, we’ll show him the skeleton and tell him, ‘You killed this man!’ We can tell the prince to come out and mourn his dad, the queen to give recognition to her husband, and the various officials to see their true lord. Old monkey and the brothers, meanwhile, can lift our hands to fight. Now, that’s what I call a worthwhile litigation because there’s something we can go on!”

Secretly pleased by what he heard, the Tang Monk nevertheless said, “My only fear is that 8 Rules is unwilling to go with you.”

“You see!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “I told you that you doted on him! How did you know that he would be unwilling to go? Perhaps you think that he’ll be like you when I called you just now, and after half an hour, I’d give up. But watch me! If you let me go near him, I’ll use only my healthy, three-inch tongue to persuade him. Never mind that he is Bullseye 8 Rules; even if he were Bullseye Nine Rules, I’d have the ability to make him go with me.”

“All right,” said the Tang Monk, “you may go and rouse him.”

Walking away from his master, Pilgrim went straight up to the side of 8 Rules’ bed and shouted, “Eight Rules! 8 Rules!” Idiot, after all, was a man overcome by travel fatigue: once he put his head down, he snored so hard that nothing could wake him. Pilgrim finally grabbed his ears and took hold of his bristles; giving a terrific pull, he yanked 8 Rules right up while shouting, “Eight Rules!” Idiot was still shuddering when Pilgrim hollered again. Idiot mumbled, “Let’s sleep! Don’t play around! We’ve to travel tomorrow.”

“I’m not playing,” said Pilgrim. “There’s some business that you and I must attend to.”

“What business?” asked 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, “Did you happen to hear what the prince said?”

“I’ve not even seen him,” said 8 Rules. “I’ve not heard what he had to say.”

“The prince told me,” said Pilgrim, “that that monster-spirit had in his possession a treasure that could overwhelm ten thousand warriors. When we enter the city tomorrow, we can’t avoid doing battle with him; but if that fiend brings out his treasure and defeats us, that’ll not be good. So, I thought that if we’d not vanquish him, we’d do something first. You and I in fact should go and steal his treasure. Isn’t that much better?”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you’re trying to persuade me to be a thief! Well, I know this sort of business, so I can be your customer. But let me say this to you clearly first: when we’ve stolen the treasure and subdued the monster-spirit, I’ll not put up with this niggardly practice of dividing the loot. I’m going to keep the treasure.”

“What for?” asked Pilgrim. “I’m not eloquent like all of you,” said 8 Rules, “and it’s not easy for me to beg for food. This body of Old bull is sluggish, and his words are dull. Moreover, I can’t even recite *Threads*. When I get to those wild, uninhabited places, I’ve hopes that I can exchange the treasure for food.” Pilgrim said, “Old monkey is only concerned with acquiring a reputation, not a treasure. Of course I’ll give it to you.” When Idiot heard that it was to be given to him, he was delighted and scrambled up at once. Climbing into his clothes, he left with Pilgrim. Truly as the saying goes:

*Even clear juice reddens a man’s face,  
And yellow gold moves the mind of Dao.*

The 2 of them opened the door stealthily and slipped away from Tripitaka; mounting the auspicious luminosity, they headed straight for the city. In a little while, they reached their destination; as they lowered their clouds, they heard the sound of the second watch struck from a tower. “Brother,” said Pilgrim, “it’s the second watch.”

“Just right!” said 8 Rules. “Everybody is sleeping soundly inside.” Instead of heading for the Central Gate of the Sun, the two of them went to the Rear Gate of the Servants where they heard also the sound of the rattle struck by guards on patrol. “Brother,” said Pilgrim, “the front and rear gates are all tightly guarded. How can we get in?” 8 Rules said, “Have you ever seen a thief walking through a door? Let’s just jump over the wall.” Pilgrim agreed and leaped at once onto the palace wall, followed by 8 Rules. Sneaking inside, the two of them searched for their way to the imperial garden.

As they walked along, they came upon a towered gate with triple eaves and flying white banners. Painted on top of the gate were three large words that were luminescent in the light of the stars and moon: “The Imperial Garden.” When Pilgrim drew near and saw that the gate was locked and sealed with several layers of crossed strips of paper, he told 8 Rules to go to work. Idiot lifted up his iron rake and brought it down on the gate as hard as he could: the gate was pulverized at once. Pilgrim led the way to enter the garden but no sooner had he stepped inside when he began to jump up and down whooping and howling. 8 Rules was so startled that he ran forward to tug at him, saying, “Elder Brother, you scare me to death! I’ve never seen a thief bellowing like that! If you wake up the people and they catch us and send us to court, even if we’re not executed we’d be banished to our native province for military service.”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “you may wonder why I’m making such a fuss. Just look at those *carved and painted railings in ruin; bejewelled sheds and towers crumbling; banks of sedges and smart-weeds all buried in dirt; Peonia and tumi<sup>4</sup> both wilted. The scent of jasmines and roses is slight; tree-peonies and lilies bloom vainly. Hibiscus, a few kinds, give way to bushes and shrubs; rare flowers and plants all perish. Artificial Rock Mountains collapse; ponds dry up and fishes decline. Green pines, purple bamboos – they’re like dried firewood; wormwood and artemisia grow rank on the paths. From cassia and peach trees twigs break off; roots of pear and plum trees are upturned. There’s green moss on the bridge-head’s winding path: the scene of this garden’s desolate!*<sup>5</sup>

“Why waste your breath in this lamentation?” said 8 Rules. “Let’s go finish our business quickly.”

Though Pilgrim was saddened by what he saw, he also thought of the dream of the Tang Monk, when he was told that the well could be found only beneath a plantain tree. As they walked along, they saw indeed such a tree whose luxuriant growth was quite different from the other plants. Truly she is a *fine, spiritual root of a kind, her empty self’s<sup>6</sup> Heaven-endowed. Every branch is thin like paper; every leaf can fold like a petal; 1000 fine strands of green enclose one cinnabar heart within. She grieves when saddened by night rain and droops for fear of autumn’s wind. She grows in the primal strength of Heaven; her nurture’s the work of Creation. A parchment forms her wondrous usage; as a fan she makes rare merit. How’d phoenix plumes approximate her? Could even phoenix tails resemble her? Bathed in droplets of light dew, swathed in slender wisps of smoke, her green shade shrouds windows and doors; green shadow mounts curtains and screens. Wild geese aren’t allowed to perch here, nor may horses be tied to her. A frigid sky will make her dejected, a moonlit night her colours faint. She can only dispel high heat and protects from the scorching sun. Bashful for lacking the peach and pear’s charm, she stands alone east of the white wall.* “Eight Rules,” said Pilgrim, “let’s get started. The treasure’s buried beneath the plantain tree.”

Idiot lifted his rake with both hands and toppled the plantain tree, after which he used his horn to burrow into the ground. After digging up some 3 or 4 feet of dirt, he discovered a slab of stone. Delighted, Idiot said, “Elder Brother, we’re lucky! There’s indeed a treasure here covered by a slab of stone. I wonder if it’s contained in a jar or a box.”

“Lift the stone up and take a look,” said Pilgrim.

Idiot indeed used his horn to give the slab of stone a shove; immediately, glimmering shafts of light shot up. Laughing, 8 Rules said, “Lucky! Lucky! The treasure’s glowing.” He went forward to take another careful look and saw that it was actually the glow of the stars and moon reflected in the water of a well. “Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “when you want to do something, you ought to get to the bottom of it.”

“How so?” asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, “This is a well. If you had told me in the monastery that the treasure would be found in a well, I’d have brought along those two ropes we use to tie our bags. Then we’d have been able to find a way to lower Old bull down there. Now we’re empty-handed. How could we go down there to fetch the thing up here?”

“You want to go down there?” asked Pilgrim. “Of course,” said 8 Rules, “but we’ve no ropes.”

“Take off your clothes,” said Pilgrim, “and I’ll give you the means.”

8 Rules said, “I don’t have any good clothes! All I’ve to do is untie this shirt.”

Dear Great Sage! He took out his golden-hooped rod and gave both its ends a pull, crying, “Grow!” It grew to about seventy or eighty feet long. “Eight Rules,” he said, “you grab hold of one end, and I’ll let you down the well.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you can do that but when we reach the surface of the water, you stop.”

“I know,” said Pilgrim.

Idiot then wrapped himself around the rod at one end, and with no effort at all Pilgrim picked him up and lowered him into the well. In a little while, they reached the edge of the water and 8 Rules said, “We’re touching water.”

When Pilgrim heard that, he gave the rod a plunge downward and with a loud splash Idiot fell into the water headfirst. Abandoning the iron rod, he began at once to tread water, muttering to himself, “Damn him! I told him to stop when we reached water but he gave me a plunge instead.” Pilgrim retrieved his rod and said, laughing, “Brother, is there any treasure?”

“What treasure?” said 8 Rules, “only a well of water!”

Pilgrim said, “The treasure has sunk deep into the water. Why don’t you go below and feel around?” Idiot indeed knew well the nature of water; he ducked his head under the surface and dove straight down. Ah, the well was extremely deep! He plunged hard a second time before opening his eyes to look around, and he saw all at once a towered edifice, on which were written the three words, “Water Crystal Palace.” Highly shaken, 8 Rules said, “Undone! Undone! I got on the wrong way. I must have fallen into the ocean, for only the ocean has a Water Crystal Palace. How could there be one in a well?” 8 Rules did not know that this happened to be the palace of the Well Dragon King.

As 8 Rules was speaking to himself, a Nature spirit on patrol opened the gate of the palace. When he saw what he saw, he ran inside to report, saying, “Great King, disaster! From the well above fell a monk with a long horn and huge ears, stark naked and without a stitch of clothing. He isn’t dead yet, and he is talking.” When the Well Dragon King heard this, he was greatly startled. “This must be the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. Last night the Night Patrol God came here by imperial decree from above to take the soul of the king of the Black Rooster Kingdom to see the Tang Monk. They were to ask the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, to subdue a fiend. This has to be the Great Sage and the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. We’d not treat them rudely. Hurry, we must welcome them.”

Straightening out his clothes, the dragon king led his water kinsmen out the door and cried in a loud voice, “Marshal of Heavenly Reeds, please take a seat inside.” 8 Rules became very pleased and said to himself, “So there’s a friend here!” Without regard for etiquette or decency, Idiot walked right into the Water Crystal Palace and, still stark naked, took the honoured seat above. “Marshal,” said the dragon king, “I heard recently that your life was spared when you embraced the Religious faith to accompany the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. For what reason have you come here?”

“I was just about to tell you that,” said 8 Rules. “My elder brother, Sun Wukong, wanted to send you his most earnest greetings. He told me to come to ask you for a certain treasure.”

“That’s pitiful!” said the dragon king. “Where do I’ve any treasure around here? I’m not like those other dragon kings of such big rivers as the Yangzi, the Yellow River, the Huai, and the Ji. When they can fly and soar through the air most of the time to transform, they will have treasures. I’ve been stuck here for a long time; I can’t even get to see the sun and the moon regularly. Where would I get any treasures?”

“Don’t refuse me,” said 8 Rules. “If you’ve any, bring them out.”

“I do have just one treasure,” said the dragon king, “but I can’t bring it out. The Marshal himself will have to go and take a look. How about it?”

“Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful!” said 8 Rules. “I’ll go and take a look.”

The dragon king walked in front while Idiot followed. They passed the Water Crystal Palace and came upon a long corridor, inside of which they found a six-foot corpse. Pointing with his finger, the dragon king said, “Marshal, that’s the treasure.” 8 Rules went forward to look at it. Ah, it was actually a dead king; still wearing a rising-to-Heaven cap, a reddish brown robe, a pair of carefree boots, and a jade belt, he lay there stiff as a board. “Hard! Hard! Hard!” said 8 Rules, chuckling. “This can’t be considered a treasure! When I recall the time when Old bull was a monster in the mountain, this thing was frequently used as food. Don’t ask me how many such things I’ve seen – even as far as eating was concerned, I’ve consumed countless numbers. How could you call this a treasure?”

“So you don’t know, Marshal,” said the dragon king, “that he is actually the corpse of the king of the Black Rooster Kingdom. Since he reached the well, I’ve embalmed him with a feature-preserving pearl so that he’ll not deteriorate. If you’re willing to carry him out of here on your back to see the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who, by the way, may have the wish to revive him, don’t speak of treasures – you can have anything you want.”

“In that case,” said 8 Rules, “I’ll carry him out on my back for you. But how much cartage are you going to pay me?”

The dragon king said, "I've no money."

"You want to use people free!" said 8 Rules. "If you really don't have any money, I'll not carry him."

"If you don't," said the dragon king, "please go."

8 Rules left at once. The dragon king however, ordered two powerful Nature spirits to haul the corpse out of the Water Crystal Palace's gate. They threw him down, took off the water-repelling pearl, and water began to close in on all sides noisily. Turning around quickly to look, 8 Rules could no longer see the gate of the Water Crystal Palace. When he stretched out his hands, all he could lay hold of was the corpse of the king, the touch of which made his legs weaken and his tendons turn numb with fear. He darted up to the surface of the water; with his hands clinging to the wall of the well, he shouted, "Elder Brother, stick your rod down here to save me!"

"Is there any treasure?" asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, "There isn't any! Beneath the water however, there's a Well Dragon King who told me to carry a dead man on my back. I'd not do it, and he sent me out the door; that was when his Water Crystal Palace disappeared also. When I felt that corpse, I was so scared that my hands grew weak and my tendons turned numb; I'd hardly move. Elder Brother, for good or ill please save me."

"That's precisely the treasure," said Pilgrim. "Why won't you carry him up here?"

8 Rules said, "He must have been dead for quite a while. Why'd I carry him on my back?"

"If you'll not," said Pilgrim, "I'll go back."

"Where?" asked 8 Rules.

"I'm going back to the monastery," said Pilgrim, "to get some sleep with Master."

"You mean I can't go with you?" said 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, "If you can climb up here, I'll take you back with me; if you can't, well that's it!" 8 Rules was horrified, for how could he possibly climb up the well. "Take a look," he yelled. "Even the city wall was hard to scale already whereas this well is large down below with a small mouth on top. All around the circular wall is straight up and down. Moreover, it has been such a long time since anyone has bailed water from this well that it's covered with moss everywhere. It's terribly slippery. How could I possibly climb it? Elder Brother, let's not upset our fraternal feelings, let me go and carry him up on my back."

"Exactly," said Pilgrim. "Do it quickly, and I'll go back with you to sleep."

Idiot put his head underwater again and dove straight down; after he found the corpse, he pulled it onto his back and shot back up to the surface. Supporting himself on the wall of the well, he cried, "Elder Brother, I'm carrying him."

Pilgrim stared into the well and saw that the body was indeed placed on 8 Rules' back. Only then did he lower the golden-hooped rod into the well. A man who had been sorely tried, Idiot opened his mouth and held on to the tip of the iron rod with his teeth; he was then lifted up out of the well by Pilgrim with no effort at all. Putting down the corpse, 8 Rules grabbed his own clothes and put them on. When Pilgrim took a look, he found that the features of the dead king had not altered in the slightest – it was as if he were still alive. "Brother," said Pilgrim, "this man has been dead for three years. How could his features not deteriorate?"

"You've no idea about this," said 8 Rules. "This Well Dragon said to me that he had embalmed the corpse with a feature-preserving pearl, and that's why it has not deteriorated."

"Lucky! Lucky!" said Pilgrim. "This has to mean that his wrong has yet to be requited, and that we're fated to succeed. Brother, put him on your back again quickly and we'll leave."

"Where do you want me to carry him?" asked 8 Rules.

"To see Master," said Pilgrim.

8 Rules began to grumble, saying, "How am I going to live with this? I was sleeping nicely when this monkey fooled me with his clever talk into doing this so-called business with him. It turns out to be this sort of enterprise – carrying a dead man on my back! When I carry him, some putrid stinking fluid is bound to drip on me and soil my clothes, and there is no one ready to wash and starch them for me. The few patches on my garment may even turn damp again when the sky is grey. How can I wear them?"

"Look, you just carry him," said Pilgrim, "and when we get to the monastery, I'll exchange clothes with you."

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" asked 8 Rules. "You've hardly anything to wear, and you're going to exchange clothes with me?" Pilgrim said, "Oh, you're so smart mouthed! You're not going to carry him?"

"No!" said 8 Rules. "Stick out your shanks then," said Pilgrim, "and I'll give you twenty strokes of my rod!" Horrified, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, that's a heavy rod! If you give me twenty strokes, I'd be like this king!"

"If you're afraid of being beaten," said Pilgrim, "then hurry up and put him on your back so that we can leave." 8 Rules was indeed afraid of being beaten; rather listlessly, he yanked the corpse over and put it on his back before turning to walk out of the garden.

Dear Great Sage! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and sucked in a mouthful of air facing the ground in the southwest. When he blew it out, a violent gust immediately arose and lifted 8 Rules out of the palace. They left the city instantly; as the wind subsided, the two of them dropped to the ground and proceeded slowly on foot. Nursing his rage in silence, Idiot planned to repay Pilgrim in kind, saying to himself, "This monkey has pulled a nice prank on me but when I get to the monastery I'm going to pull one on him, too. I'm going to persuade Master to insist on restoring the king back to life. If that monkey can't do it, I'll make Master recite that Tight-Fillet Spell until this monkey's brains burst. That will give me some relief!" He walked along and thought further to himself, "No good, no good! If you make him heal the man, all he has to do is to go and ask King Yama for the soul, and the man will live again. I must set the conditions so that he'll not be permitted to go to the Region of Darkness; the king has to be restored to life through some means found in the World of Light. Only such a plan is good."

Hardly had he finished speaking to himself when they reached the gate of the monastery. 8 Rules walked right through it and went up to the door of the Chan hall where he threw down the corpse and cried, "Master, get up and look at this." Unable to sleep, Tripitaka was just chatting with Sand-monk on how Pilgrim had deceived 8 Rules into going with him, and how they did not return after such a long time. When he heard the call, the Tang Monk quickly arose and said, "Disciple, what do you want me to look at?"

"The grandpa of Pilgrim," said 8 Rules, "whom Old bull has brought back on his back."

"You pie-eyed Idiot!" said Pilgrim. "Where do I've a grandpa?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "if he isn't your grandpa, why did you ask Old bull to bear him here? You don't know how much energy I've wasted!"

The Tang Monk and Sand-monk opened the door to look, and they discovered that the countenance of the king had not altered at all. Turning sad all at once, the elder said, "Your Majesty, in which previous existence did you incur an enemy who had to catch up with you in this one and cause you to lose your life? Alas, you left your wife and your child, unknown to all the civil and military officials! Pity your wife who's still in the dark! Who will burn incense or pour tea for you?" He was so broken up that he could not speak anymore as tears rained down his cheeks.

"Master," said 8 Rules, laughing, "what does his death have to do with you? He isn't one of your ancestors. Why weep for him?"

"O disciple!" said the Tang Monk, "the fundamental principle of life for those who have left the family is compassion. How could you be so hard-hearted?"

"I'm not hard-hearted," said 8 Rules, "for Elder Brother told me that he could restore him to life. If he couldn't, I'd not have carried him back here." This elder, after all, had a head full of water! Shaken by these few words of Idiot, he said at once, "Wukong, if you indeed have the ability to restore this king to life, you'd have accomplished something greater than building a seven-storied heap. And even we'd have been benefited as if we'd worshipped God in the Spirit Mountain."

Pilgrim said, "Master, how could you believe the nonsense of this Idiot! When a man dies, he can pass through the periods of three times seven or five times seven; at most, he may wait for seven hundred days, when after having suffered for all the sins committed in the World of Light, he will then proceed to the next disciple. This man here died three years ago. How could I revive him?" When Tripitaka heard these words, he said, "Oh, all right!"

Still bitterly resentful however, 8 Rules said, "Master, don't believe him. He's a little sick in his brain! Just recite that little something of yours and you're certain to get a living man." The Tang Monk indeed began to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell and the monkey had such a headache that his eyes bulged.

***1 pellet of cinnabar elixir found in Heaven; a king dead 3 years, lives again on Earth***

The Great Sage Sun who could hardly bear his headache. "Master," he pleaded pitifully, "stop reciting! Stop reciting! Let me try to heal him."

"How?" asked the elder. Pilgrim said, "All I need to do is to go to the Region of Darkness and find out in which of the Ten Kings' chambers his soul is residing. I'll fetch it and he'll be saved."

"Master, don't believe him," said 8 Rules. "He told me originally that he needn't go to the Region of Darkness, that his real ability could not be seen unless a cure was found in the World of Light." Believing in such perverse tattle, the elder began to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell once more. Pilgrim was so horrified shows reverence like that, old monkey can then exert his efforts."

"Don't stop," said 8 Rules, "just keep reciting!"

"You idiotic cursed beast!" chided Pilgrim. "You're just trying to coax Master into putting that spell on me!"

Laughing until he nearly collapsed, 8 Rules said, "O Elder Brother! You only know how to pull tricks on me but you don't realise that I can do the same on you."

"Master, please stop," said Pilgrim, "and let old monkey find a cure in the World of Light for the king."

"Where would you find it in the World of Light?" asked Tripitaka.

"With a single cloud somersault," said Pilgrim, "I'll penetrate the South Heaven Gate but I'll not go into the Big Dipper Palace nor into the Divine Mists Hall. Instead, I'll go straight up to the Thirty-third Heaven, to the Tushita Palace of the Griefless Heaven. When I see Laozi there, I'll beg him for one pellet of his Soul-Restoring Elixir of Nine Reversions that will certainly make this man live again."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he was very pleased and said, "Go quickly and come back."

"It's about the hour of the third watch at this moment," said Pilgrim, "but by the time I get back, it'll be dawn. The trouble with this man sleeping here like this is that the whole atmosphere seems so dull and heartless. Someone here should mourn him and that'll be more like it."

"It goes without saying," said 8 Rules, "that this monkey would like me to mourn the king."

"Yes but I'm afraid that you'll not," said Pilgrim. "If you'll not, I can't heal him either!"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you may go. I'll mourn him." Pilgrim said, "There are several ways of mourning: when you merely open your mouth to make noises, that's called howling; when you squeeze out some tears, that's weeping. When you mourn with both tears and feelings, then we may call that wailing."

"I'll give you an example of how I can wail!" said 8 Rules who pulled out a scrap of paper from somewhere and rolled it into a thin strip that he stuck into his nostrils twice. Look at him! After sneezing a few times, tears and snivel all came out and he began to wail, mumbling and muttering protests all the time as if someone in his family had actually died. He bawled lustily, and when his passion rose to a terrific pitch, even the Tang elder was moved to tears. "That's the sort of grief I want you to show," said Pilgrim with a laugh, "and you're not permitted to stop. For if you, Idiot, think that you can quit mourning after I leave, you're mistaken, for I can still hear you. You'll be all right if you keep this up but the moment I discover that your voice has stopped, your shanks will be given twenty strokes."

"You go!" said 8 Rules, chuckling. "Once I start to mourn, it will take me a couple of days to finish." When Sand-monk heard how stern Pilgrim's reprimand of 8 Rules was, he went and lit a few sticks of incense to bring to offer to the dead king. "Fine! Fine! Fine!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "When the whole family shows reverence like that, old monkey can then exert his efforts."

Dear Great Sage! At this hour of midnight, he took leave of master and disciples, the three of them; mounting the cloud somersault, he entered at once the South Heaven Gate. Indeed, he did not go before the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists, nor did he ascend to the Big Dipper Palace. Treading on his cloudy luminosity, he went straight to the Griefless Heaven, the Tushita Palace of the Thirty-third Heaven. The moment he walked inside the door, he discovered Laozi sitting in the elixir chamber: in the process of making elixir, he and a few divine youths were tending the fires with plantain fans. When he saw Pilgrim approaching, he immediately instructed the youths with these words: "Take care, each of you. The thief who once stole our elixir is here."

Saluting him, Pilgrim said with laughter, "Venerable Sir, don't be so silly! Why take such precaution against me? I do those things no more!"

"Monkey," said Laozi, "when you caused great disruption in Heaven five centuries ago, you stole and consumed countless efficacious elixirs of mine. And when we sent the Little Sage Erlang to arrest you and bring you to the Region Above, you're sent to be refined in my elixir brazier for forty-nine days and made me squander who knows how much charcoal. You're lucky to have regained your freedom when you embraced the Religious fruit and resolved to accompany the Tang Monk to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. But even then, you're still giving me a hard time when I asked you for my treasures after you had subdued the demons some time ago on the Level-Top Mountain. What are you doing here today?"

"I didn't give you a hard time," said Pilgrim. "Old monkey at the time gave you back your five treasures without delay. Why are you still so suspicious?"

"Why aren't you on the road then?" asked Laozi. "Why did you sneak into my palace?"

Pilgrim said, "After we parted, we proceeded toward the West until we came to the Black Rooster Kingdom. The king there had been murdered by a monster-spirit masquerading as a Daoist able to summon wind and rain. The monster then changed himself into the form of the king, and now he sits in the Hall of Golden Chimes. When my master read the *Threads* during the night before last in the Precious Grove Monastery, the king's spirit appeared to him and requested earnestly for old monkey to subdue the fiend for him. Because old monkey considered the problem of evidence, he went to the imperial garden with 8 Rules to look for the burial site. Within a well of octagonal marble walls, we fished out the king's corpse, so perfectly preserved that neither his colour nor his appearance had changed. When we brought him back to my master, he was moved by compassion and wanted me to revive him. The condition was set however, that I'd not go to the Region of Darkness to fetch his soul, and that I must find some means to revive him in the World of Light. I concluded that there was no other remedy available, and that was why I came especially to see you. I beseech the Patriarch of Tao to be merciful and lend me one thousand tablets of your Soul-Restoring Elixir of Nine Reversions, so that old monkey can save the king."

"This ape's babbling!" said Laozi. "What're you saying – one thousand, two thousand tablets! You eat them like rice? You think they're kneaded with mud? That easy? No! Go quickly! I've none!"

"All right," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "how about a hundred tablets?"

"I've none," said Laozi.

"Just ten tablets, then," said Pilgrim.

"This wretched ape's an absolute pest!" said Laozi angrily. "I've none. Get out! Get out!"

"You've really none?" said Pilgrim, laughing. "I'll go somewhere to look for help then."

"Go! Go! Go!" shouted Laozi.

Turning around, the Great Sage strode out at once. Laozi suddenly thought to himself, "This monkey is such a rogue! When I told him to go, he left but I fear that he might sneak back in and start stealing." He ordered a divine youth to call Pilgrim back at once, saying, "You ape, you've itchy hands and feet! I'll give you one tablet of my Soul-Restoring Elixir."

"Venerable Sir," said Pilgrim, "if you know the talent of old monkey, you'll bring out your golden elixir at once and divide up what you've with me equitably. That'll be your good fortune! Otherwise, I'm going to swipe them clean for you." Taking out his gourd, the patriarch turned it upside down and poured out one pellet of golden elixir. He handed it over to Pilgrim, saying, "That's all I've. Take it, take it! I'm *giving* it to you, you know, and when that king is revived, it'll be counted as your merit." Pilgrim took it and said, "Let's not hurry! I'm going to have a taste of it first, for I'm not going to be duped by some bogus pill!" He popped it into his mouth at once. The old patriarch was so startled that he dashed forward and grabbed the skin on Pilgrim's head. Holding high his fist, he shouted, "You wretched ape! If you dare swallow it, I'll kill you!"

"Shame on you!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "Don't be so petty! Who's going to eat your stuff! How much could it be worth, this flimsy stuff? Isn't it right here?"

The monkey had a little pouch just beneath his jaw and that was where he kept the golden elixir. After the patriarch had felt it with his fingers, he said, "Go away! Bother me here no more!"

Then the Great Sage thanked the old patriarch and left the Tushita Heaven Palace. *Look at him! In countless hallowed beams he left the arches of jade; on myriad auspicious clouds he went to the world of dust.* In a moment, he left the South Heaven Gate behind and as the sun came up, he dropped from the clouds and arrived at the gate of the Precious Grove Monastery. 8 Rules' weeping could still be heard when he approached crying, "Master."

"Wukong's returned," said Tripitaka, delighted. "Do you've any elixir or medicine?"

"I do," said Pilgrim. "He couldn't possibly not have it!" said 8 Rules. "He would have brought back something even if he had to steal it!"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "you can get out of the way, I don't need you anymore. Wipe away your tears, or you can go somewhere to weep. Sand-monk, please fetch me some water."

Sand-monk hurried to the well in the rear where there was a bucket nearby. He bailed out half an alms bowl of water and brought it to Pilgrim. After he took it, Pilgrim spat out the elixir and placed it inside the lips of the king. Then with both hands, he pulled the jaws of the king apart, and using a mouthful of clean water, he flushed the golden elixir down to the king's stomach. After about half an hour, loud gurgling noises came from the belly of the king, although his body remained immobile. "Master," said Pilgrim, "even my golden elixir seems unable to revive him! Could it be that old monkey's going to be finished off by blackmail?" Tripitaka said, "Nonsense! There's no reason for him not to live. How could he swallow that water if he had been only a corpse dead for a long time? It had to be the divine power of that golden elixir that entrance into his stomach now causes the intestines to growl. When that happens, it means that circulation and pulse are in harmonious motion once more. His breath however, is still stopped and cannot flow freely. But that's to be expected when a man has been submerged in a well for three years; after all, even raw iron would be completely rusted. That's why his primal breath is all used up, and someone should give him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation."

8 Rules walked forward and was about to do this when he was stopped by Tripitaka. "You can't do it," he said. "Wukong still should take over." That elder indeed had presence of mind, for Bullseye 8 Rules had been a cannibal since his youth, and his breath was unclean. Pilgrim, on the other hand, had practiced self-cultivation since his birth, the food sustaining him being various fruits and nuts, and thus his breath was pure. The Great Sage, therefore, went forward and clamped his thunder-god beak to the lips of the king: a mighty breath was blown through his throat to descend the tiered towers.<sup>1</sup> Invading the bright hall, it reached the cinnabar field and the jetting-spring points beyond before it reversed its direction and travelled to the mud-pill chamber of the crown. With a loud swoosh, the king's breath came together and his spirit returned; he turned over and at once flexed his hands and feet crying, "Master!" Going then to his knees, he said, "I remember my soul as a ghost did see you last night but I didn't expect this morning my spirit would return to the World of Light."

Tripitaka hurriedly tried to raise him saying, "Your Majesty, I did nothing. You'd thank my disciple."

"Master, what're you saying?" said Pilgrim with laughter. "The proverb says, *a household doesn't have two heads*. You'd accept his salute."

Greatly embarrassed nonetheless, Tripitaka raised the king up with both hands and they went together into the Chan hall. The king insisted on greeting Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk before he would take a seat. The resident monks of the monastery had just finished preparing the morning meal and they were about to present it when they discovered a king with soaking wet garments. Everyone became frightened; each of them began to speculate. Pilgrim Sun however, leaped into their midst and said, "Monks, don't be so alarmed. This is in fact the king of the Black Rooster Kingdom, the true ruler of all of you. Three years ago he was murdered by a fiend but old monkey revived him last night. We plan to go with him to the city presently to distinguish the perverse from the true. If you've some vegetarian food prepared, bring it here, so that we can start our journey after we eat." The monks then presented hot water also so that the king could wash up and change his clothes. The royal reddish brown robe was discarded, and he put on instead two cloth shirts given to him by the monk-official. They took off the jade belt and tied him up with a yellow silk sash; after the carefree boots were removed, he was given a pair of old monk sandals. Then they had their vegetarian breakfast before going to saddle the horse.

"Eight Rules," said Pilgrim, "how heavy is your luggage?"

"I've been toting it every day," said 8 Rules, "and I really don't know how heavy it is." Pilgrim said, "Divide one and let the king take up the other one. We'd get to the city early to do our work." Delighted, 8 Rules said, "Lucky! Lucky! When I brought him here on my back, I used up a lot of my strength. I'd no idea that he could be my substitute after he had been healed." Resorting at once to mischief, Idiot divided the luggage; he carried the lighter load with a flat pole that he acquired from the monastery whereas the heavier load he gave to the king to pole. "Your Majesty," said Pilgrim with a chuckle, "I hope you don't mind our treatment, dressing you in that manner and asking you to pick up a pole to follow us?" Kneeling down immediately, the king said, "Master, you're like parents who have given me a new birth. Don't mention anything about poling some luggage. I'm even willing to pick up the whip and hold the stirrups to look after the Venerable Dad and follow him all the way to the Western Heaven."

Pilgrim said, "There's no need for you to do that but I've a reason for making you do this at the moment. You can help us carry the luggage for these forty miles until we've entered the city and caught the monster-spirit. Then you can become a king again and we'll go and fetch our scriptures."

Hearing this, 8 Rules said, "In that case, he's going to pole for only forty miles. After that, Old bull will remain as a long-term labourer!"

"Brother, no more foolish talk!" said Pilgrim. "Get out there and lead the way." 8 Rules indeed walked with the king in front to lead the way while Sand-monk helped his master to mount the horse and Pilgrim took up the rear. Arranged in an orderly formation, the five hundred monks of that monastery followed them all the way to the gate, beating their drums. Smiling, Pilgrim said, "No need for you monks to accompany us any further. I fear that if any of this is leaked to the officials, our enterprise will be ruined. Go back quickly! Go back quickly! Only see to it that the king's clothing and belt are cleaned and prepared. Send them to the city either late tonight or early tomorrow morning. I'll ask for some reward for you."

The monks obeyed and returned to their quarters while Pilgrim in big strides caught up with his master to proceed with him. So it is that *the West has mystery, it's good to seek the truth. Wood and Metal in concord, then spirit can be refined. The elixir mum recalls in vain a foolish dream; the child deplores deeply how powerless he is. You must seek at a well's bottom the enlightened lord and then salute Laozi in the Hall of Heaven. Back to one's own nature once you see form's emptiness, <sup>2</sup>one is thus truly a god-led man of affinity.* It did not take master and disciples even half a day on the road when they saw a city approaching. "Wukong," said Tripitaka, "I suppose that must be the Black Rooster Kingdom ahead of us."

"Exactly," said Pilgrim. "Let's enter the city quickly so that we can do our business." After they entered the city, master and disciples found the population well-mannered and engaged in a great deal of bustling activities. As they walked along, they soon came upon the phoenix bowers and dragon towers, exceedingly grand and ornate edifices for which a testimonial poem says:

*These outland buildings are like the sovereign states; <sup>3</sup>like those of old Tang, people recite and exercise.*

*Flowers greet jewelled fans trailed by roseate clouds; fresh robes, sunlit, glimmer in jade-green fog.*

*Peacock screens open and fragrant mist pours out; pearly shades roll up as coloured flags unfurl.*

*A picture of peace most worthy of praise: quiet rows of nobles but no memorials.*

"Disciples," said Tripitaka as he dismounted, "we might as well go right into the court to have our rescript certified and not be bothered by some bureaucratic office."

"That's reasonable," said Pilgrim. "We brothers will go in with you; it's easier to talk when you've more people on your side."

The Tang Monk said, "If all of you're going inside, you mustn't be rowdy. Let's go through the proper ceremony of greeting a ruler before we do any talking."

"If you want to go through that," said Pilgrim, "it means that you've to salute yourself."

"Exactly," said the Tang Monk, "we've to undertake the grand ceremony of five salutes and three respects."

"Master, you're too insipid!" said Pilgrim with a chuckle. "It's so unwise of you to want to pay homage to that character! Let me go in first, for I know what I'm going to do. If he has anything to say to us, let me answer him. If I salute, you all can salute with me; if I crouch, you crouch also."

Look at that mischievous Monkey King! He went straight up to the gate of the court and said to the guardian official, "We've been sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go worship God in the Western Heaven and to acquire scriptures from him. Having arrived in this region, we'd like to have our rescript certified. May we trouble you to report this to the king so that the act of virtuous fruit will not be delayed."

The Custodian of the Yellow Gate went at once to the gate of the main hall and knelt before the vermilion steps to memorialise, saying, "There're five monks outside the gate of the court who claim that they have been sent by imperial decree from the Tang nation in the Land of the East to go to see God for scriptures in the Western Heaven. They would like to have their rescript certified but they dare not enter the court, and they await your summons."

The demon king at once gave the order to summon them inside. The Tang Monk then proceeded to walk inside the court followed by the king who had been revived. As they walked, the king could not stop the tears from rolling down his cheeks, thinking to himself, "How pitiful indeed! My bronze-guarded empire, my iron-clad domain, had been secretly taken over by him."

"Your Majesty," said Pilgrim softly, "you must not show your sorrow at this moment, for we may reveal everything. The rod in my ear is getting rather restless. In a moment, it will achieve a great merit by beating a demon to death and banishing all perversity. Your empire will soon be returned to you." The king dared not disobey; pulling up his robe to wipe away the tears, he followed them resolutely up to the Hall of Golden Chimes.

The rows of civil and military officials, some four hundred of them, all stood there with great sobriety and noble looks. Pilgrim led the Tang Monk up to the white jade steps; he then stood still and remained erect. All those officials beneath the steps became terrified, saying, "This monk is most foolish and base! When he sees our king, why does he not salute himself, nor does he express his praise? He doesn't even give a salute! How audacious and rude!"

Before they even finished speaking, the demon king asked, "Where did this monk come from?" Pilgrim replied boldly, "I'm from the Great Tang nation in the Land of the East, in the South Jambūdvīpa Continent, someone sent by imperial decree to go seek the living God in the Great Thunderclap Monastery of India in the Western Territories for true scriptures. Having reached this region, I don't want to pass through it without having our travel rescript certified."

When the demon king heard what he said, he became angry, saying, "So what if you're from the Land of the East? We're not paying tribute in your court, nor have we any intercourse with your nation. How dare you neglect your etiquette and not salute us?" Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Our celestial court in the Land of the East was established in antiquity, and ours had been called the superior state for a long time. Yours is only a state of the hinterlands in an inferior region. Haven't you heard of the ancient saying? *The king of the superior state's dad and ruler; the king of the inferior state's son and*

*subject.* You've not even received me properly and dare chide me for not saluting you?" Infuriated, the demon king shouted to the civil and military officials, "Seize this wild monk!" When he said, "Seize," all the officials surged forward.

Pointing immediately with his finger, Pilgrim cried, "Cease!" That was the magic of immobilisation that made the various officials unable to move at all. Truly *the captains before the steps looked like idols of wood and marshals in the palace resembled men of clay.* When the demon king saw how Pilgrim had rendered immobile all the officials, he leaped up from the dragon couch and was about to seize Pilgrim himself. Secretly pleased, the Monkey King thought, "Good! Exactly what old monkey wanted! The moment you come near, your head's going to have a gaping hole even if it's made of raw iron when my rod finds it."

He was about to strike, when suddenly a saving star appeared from one side. It was none other than the prince of the Black Rooster Kingdom. Dashing up to tug at the demon king's garment, the prince knelt before him and said, "Let the anger of dad king subside."

"What do you want to say, my child?" asked the monster-spirit.

"Let me report this to dad king," said the prince. "Three years ago I heard already that there was a sage monk sent by the Throne of the Tang in the Land of the East to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven but I didn't expect that he would arrive this day. The honoured nature of dad king is powerful and ferocious, I know. But if you seize this monk and have him executed, the great Tang could be greatly angered if ever they should learn of this one day. Remember that Li Shimin<sup>4</sup> who, since he established his throne, did succeed in uniting his empire. Still not content, he went on various expeditions of conquest to foreign lands. If he discovers that our king has murdered the sage monk, his bond-brother, he will most certainly call up troops and horses to war with us. When we realise then how small is our army and how weak our generals are, it will be too late for regrets. Let the dad king approve the memorial of his son, let him make a thorough investigation of the background of these four monks. We must first establish why they would not pay homage to the Throne before we convict them."

This entire speech was motivated by the prince's caution who feared that the Tang Monk might be hurt and that was why he deliberately stopped the demon. The prince, of course, did not know that Pilgrim was about to strike. Consenting indeed to the words of the prince, the demon king stood before the dragon couch and loudly asked, "When did this monk leave the Land of the East? For what reason did the Tang emperor ask you to seek scriptures?"

Again Pilgrim replied boldly, "My master is the bond-brother of the Tang emperor, and his honourific is Tripitaka. There is a prime minister before the Tang throne whose name is Wei Zheng, and who has by the decree of Heaven beheaded an old dragon of the Jing River. Because of this, the Great Tang emperor also had to tour the Region of Darkness in his dream, and after he was revived, he opened wide the plot of truth by giving a Grand Mass of Land and Water to redeem the wronged souls and damned spirits. As my master recited and performed the *Threads* to magnify the power of compassion, the Nun Guanshiyin of South Sea revealed to him suddenly that he should journey to the West. Making a grand promise, my master accepted the commission freely and gladly to serve his nation, and that was when the emperor bestowed on him the rescript. On the third day before the fifteenth, during the ninth month of the thirteenth year in the Zhenguan period of the Great Tang, he left the Land of the East. When he reached the Mountain of Two Frontiers, he accepted me as his disciple. My surname is Sun, and my name is Wukong Pilgrim. Next, we arrived at the Gao Family Village of the Qoco Kingdom where my master made his second disciple; his surname is Bullseye, and his name is Aware of Ability 8 Rules. At the Flowing Sand River, the third disciple joined the fold; his surname is Sha, and his name is Awakened to Purity Monk. The day before yesterday at the Precious Grove Monastery Built by Imperial Command, we newly acquired a mendicant worker<sup>5</sup> who now helps us with poling the luggage."

After the demon king heard this speech, he found it difficult to turn up an excuse for examining the Tang Monk further, and it was even more difficult for him to try to overwhelm Pilgrim with deceptive interrogation. Glowering, he said, "You, monk! When you first left the Land of the East, you're all by yourself but then you accepted all these four persons into your company. Those three monks may be all right but this worker looks most suspicious. This mendicant must have been kidnapped from somewhere. What is his name? Does he have a certificate of ordination? Bring him up here and let him make a deposition." Trembling all over, the king said, "O Master! How shall I make this deposition?" Giving him a pinch, Pilgrim said, "Don't be afraid. Let me do it for you."

Dear Great Sage! He strode forward and said to the fiend in a loud voice, "Your Majesty, this old worker is not only dumb but he is also somewhat deaf. We took him on because he knew the way to the Western Heaven, having gone there himself in his younger days. I know everything about him – his background, his origin, his rise and fall. I beg your Majesty's pardon but let me make the deposition for him."

"Do it quickly and truthfully," said the demon king, "lest he be convicted of a serious offence."

Pilgrim said, *"Of this deposition the mendicant's quite old; deaf, dumb, and dim-witted, he's also poor! A man whose native home was in this place, he met defeat and ruin five years ago. With no rain from the sky, folks turned shrivelled and dry. King and subjects all fasted and abstained; they bathed and burned incense to pray to Heaven but no cloud was seen for ten thousand miles. While people starved as though hung upside down, there came from Zhongnan a Complete Truth fiend who called up wind and rain to show his power and then took in secret the king's own life. The victim was pushed down a garden well; the dragon seat was taken unknown to man. Luckily I came. My merit was great: no snag it was to bring life back from death. Willing to submit as a mendicant, he'd follow the monk to face the West. That specious king is a Daoist in fact; this worker's in truth the rightful king."*

When that demon king on the Hall of Golden Chimes heard this speech, he became so frightened that his heart pounded like the feet of a young deer and his face was flushed with red clouds. He wanted to run away at once but he did not even have a weapon in his hands. Turning around, he saw one of the captains of palace guards who had a scimitar buckled to his waist and who had been rendered a dumb and stupid person standing there by Pilgrim's magic of immobilization. Dashing up to him, the demon king took this scimitar and then immediately mounted the clouds to escape in the air. Sand-monk and Bullseye 8 Rules were so annoyed by this turn of events that they screamed at Pilgrim, "You impatient ape! Why did you've to say all those things at once? You'd have tricked him into staying if you had used a slower approach. Now that he has mounted the clouds and escaped where would you go to search for him?"

"Don't scream madly like that, brothers," said Pilgrim with laughter. "Let me ask the prince to come out and salute his dad and the queen to greet her husband first. Let me then recite another spell to release those ministers from my magic so that they can learn the truth about what has happened and pay homage to the real king. Then I can go look for him." Dear Great Sage! After he had disposed of everything he said he would do, he told 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "Take care to guard ruler and subjects, dad and son, husband and wife, and our master. I'm off!" Hardly had he finished speaking before he was completely out of sight.

Rising straight up to the clouds of the 9-fold Heaven, Pilgrim opened wide his eyes to stare all around: the demon king, having escaped with his life, was fleeing toward the northeast. Pilgrim caught up with him in no time, shouting, "Fiend where are you going? Old monkey's here." Swiftly turning around, the demon king brought out his scimitar and said with a loud voice, "Pilgrim Sun, what a rogue you're! I took the throne of another man but that didn't concern you. Why did you've to be involved in someone's affairs and reveal my secret?"

Roaring with laughter, Pilgrim said, "You audacious, lawless fiend! You think you ought to be permitted to be a king? If you recognised old monkey, you'd have fled at the earliest opportunity to the farthest place. How dare you try to give my master a hard time, asking for that so-called deposition? That deposition I gave you just now, was that accurate or not? Don't run away now! If you're a man, have a taste of old monkey's rod!" The demon king stepped aside to dodge the blow before he wielded the scimitar to meet his opponent. The moment their weapons joined, it was a marvellous battle.

*Truly the Monkey King is fierce, the demon king is strong – rod and scimitar dare each other oppose. This day the 3 Regions are bedimmed by fog, all for a king's restoration to his court.* After the two of them fought for a few rounds, the demon king could no longer withstand the Monkey King and fled instead back into the city on the way he came. Hurling himself into the two rows of civil and military officials before the white jade steps, the demon king gave his body a shake and changed into an exact image of Tripitaka Tang, both of them standing hand-in-hand before the steps. The Great Sage arrived and was about to strike with the rod when the fiend said, "Disciple, don't hit me! It's I!" Pilgrim turned the rod toward the other Tang Monk who also said, "Disciple, don't hit me! It's I!"

There were two Tang Monks exactly alike and most difficult to distinguish. Thinking to himself, "If I kill the monster spirit with one blow of the rod, it would be my merit, all right; but what would I do if that blow happens to kill my true master?" Pilgrim had to stop and ask 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "Which is the fiend and which is our master? Point him out to me so that I can strike at him."

"You two were yelling and fighting in mid-air," said 8 Rules, "and when I blinked my eyes, I saw two masters the next moment. I don't know who is real and who is false."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he made the magic sign with his fingers and recited a spell that called together the various demigod guardians, the 6 Gods of Darkness and the 6 Gods of Light, the Guardians of 5 Quarters, the 4 Sentinels, the 18 Guardians of the Faith, the local spirit, and the mountain god of that region. He said to them, "Old monkey's trying to subdue a monster here who's changed himself into the likeness of my master. Both their form and substance seem exactly the same and it's difficult to tell them apart. But you may be able to distinguish them in secret; if so, make my master walk up the steps into the main hall so that I can catch this demon."

The fiend was accomplished in magic; when he heard these words of Pilgrim, he quickly bounded into the Hall of Golden Chimes. Pilgrim raised his rod and brought it down hard on the Tang Monk. Alas! If it had not been for desperate efforts of those several deities summoned to this place, the blow would have reduced even twenty Tang Monks to meat patties! Fortunately the various deities managed to block the blow, saying, "Great Sage, the fiend knows his magic. He has gone up to the hall first."

Pilgrim gave chase at once, and the demon king ran outside the hall to catch hold of the Tang Monk once more in the crowd. After this confusion, they again could not be distinguished. Pilgrim was highly displeased and when he saw moreover that 8 Rules was snickering on one side, he became enraged, saying, "What's the matter with you, stupid coolie? Now you've two masters whose calls you must answer and whom you must serve. Are you overjoyed?"

Laughing, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, you say I'm dumb; well, you're even dumber! If you can't recognise who is the real master, why waste all this energy? You try to endure a little pain on your head for a moment and ask Master to recite that little something of his. Sand-monk and I'll each hold on to one of them and listen: that person who does not know how to recite the spell must be the monster. What's so difficult about that?"

"Thank you, Brother," said Pilgrim. "You've got it. That little something indeed is known only to three persons: born of the very mind of our God Siddhartha, it was transmitted to the Nun Guanshiyin who then imparted it to my master. There is no other person who has knowledge of it. All right, Master, start your recital." In truth the Tang Monk began to recite but how could the demon king know what to do? All he could do was mumble something, and 8 Rules said, "This one mumbling is the monster!" He let go and raised his muckrake to strike at the demon king who leaped up and tried to flee, treading the clouds.

Dear 8 Rules! With a shout, he mounted the clouds also to give chase. Sand-monk hurriedly abandoned the Tang Monk and brought out his precious staff to do battle. Only then did the Tang Monk stop reciting his spell; the Great Sage Sun, enduring his headache, dragged his iron rod up to mid-air. Ah, look at this battle! Three fierce monks have surrounded a brazen demon!

The demon king was attacked left and right by 8 Rules with his rake and Sand-monk with his staff. Chuckling to himself, Pilgrim said, "If I go attack him face to face, he will try to escape as he is already somewhat afraid of me. Let old monkey get up higher and give me a garlic-pounding blow from the top down. That'll finish him off!"

Mounting the auspicious luminosity, the Great Sage rose to the 9-fold Heaven and was about to show his decisive hand when a loud voice came from a petal of coloured cloud in the northeast: "Sun Wukong, don't do it!" When Pilgrim turned to look, he discovered the Nun the Beautiful 1 with Glory and Auspiciousness. Quickly putting away his rod, he drew near and saluted saying, "Nun, where're you going?"

"I came," said The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness, "to put away this fiend for you."

Pilgrim thanked him and said, "I'm greatly obliged." Taking out an imp-reflecting mirror from his sleeve, the Nun aimed it at the fiend and the image of its original form became visible at once. Pilgrim called 8 Rules and Sand-monk to come to greet the Nun and to look into the mirror. Exceedingly ferocious in appearance, that demon king had *eyes like large goblets of glass; a head like a cooking vat; a body of deep summer green; and 4 paws like autumn's frost; 2 large ears that flipped downward; a tail as long as a broom; green hair full of fighting ardour; red eyes emitting gold beams; rows of flat teeth like jade slabs; round whiskers rearing up like spears. The true form seen in the mirror's The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness's lion-king.* "Nun," said Pilgrim, "so this is the green-haired lion who serves as your beast of burden. How was it that he had been turned loose so that he could become a spirit here? Aren't you going to make him submit to you?"

"Wukong," said the Nun, "he was not turned loose. He had been sent by the decree of God to come here." Pilgrim said, "You mean that this beast's becoming a spirit to usurp the throne of a king was a decree of God? If that's the case, old monkey who is accompanying the Tang Monk through all his trials, should have been given several imperial documents!"

The Nun said, "You don't know that this king of the Black Rooster Kingdom was dedicated to virtue and to the feeding of monks at first. A god sent me to lead him to return to the West so that he could attain the golden body of an *Arhat*. I'd not, of course, reveal myself to him in my true form, and so I changed myself into an ordinary mortal monk to beg some food from him. During our conversation a few words of mine put him on the spot; not realising that I was a good man after all, he tied me up with a rope and sent me into the imperial moat. I soaked in there for three days and nights before the Six Gods of Darkness rescued me back to the West. Siddhartha therefore sent this creature here to push him down the well and have him submerged for three years, in order to exact vengeance for my water adversity of three days. Thus 'not even a sup or a bite is not foreordained,' and we'd to wait for all of you to arrive and achieve this merit."

"You might have repaid the private grievance of your so-called one sup or one bite," said Pilgrim, "but who knows how many human beings that fiendish creature has harmed."

"He's not," said the Nun. "In fact, these three years after his arrival have seen nothing but winds and rains in season, prosperity for the kingdom, and peace for the inhabitants. Since when has he harmed anyone?"

"Even so," said Pilgrim, "those ladies of the three palaces did sleep with him and rise with him. His body has defiled many and violated the great human relations countless times. And you say that he has not harmed anyone?" The Nun said, "He has not defiled anyone, for he's a gelded lion." When 8 Rules heard this, he walked near and gave the creature a pat, saying with a chuckle, "This monster-spirit is truly a 'red nose who doesn't drink'! He bears his name in vain!"

"All right," said Pilgrim, "take him away. If the Nun did not come here himself, I'd never have spared his life." Reciting a spell, the Nun shouted, "Beast, how long are you going to wait before you submit to the Right?" The demon king at once changed back to his original form, after which the Nun released the lotus flower seat to be placed on the back of the lion. He then mounted the lion who trod on the auspicious luminosity and left. Aha! *He went straight to the Wutai Mountain<sup>6</sup> to hear Threads explained before the lotus seat.*

040

The playful transformations of the child confuse the Chan Mind; Ape, Horse, Spatula gone, Wood Mum's lost, too

The Great Sage Sun and his 2 brothers who lowered their clouds and returned to the court. They were met by the king, the queen, and their subjects – all of them lined up in rows to salute and express their thanks. Pilgrim then gave a complete account of how the Nun came to subdue the monster, and all the officials in court touched the top of their heads to the ground in adoration. As they were thus rejoicing, the Custodian of the Yellow Gate arrived to announce, "My lord, there are four more monks who have arrived at the gate." A little apprehensive, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, could it be that the monster-spirit, having used magic to disguise himself as the Nun The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness to deceive us, has now changed again into some kind of monk to match wits with us?"

"How could that be?" said Pilgrim who then asked that the monks be summoned inside.

After the civil and military officials transmitted the order and the visitors entered, Pilgrim saw that they were monks from the Precious Grove Monastery who came bearing the rising-to-Heaven cap, the green-jade belt, the brownish yellow robe, and the carefree boots. Highly pleased, Pilgrim said, "It's wonderful that you've come!" He asked the mendicant worker to step forward: his head-wrap was taken off and the rising-to-Heaven cap was placed on his head; the cloth garment was stripped off and he put on the brownish yellow robe instead; after he untied the silk sash and took off the monk sandals, he buckled on the jade-green belt and climbed into the carefree boots. The prince was then told to bring out the white jade token so that the king might hold it in his hands, and he was asked to ascend the main hall to be the king once more. As the ancient proverb said, "The court should not be one day without a ruler." But the king absolutely refused to sit on the throne; weeping profusely, he knelt on the steps and said, "I've been dead for three years, and I'm indebted to Master for making me return to life. How could I dare assume such honour again? Let one of these masters be the ruler; I'll be perfectly content to go with my wife and child outside the city to live as a commoner." Tripitaka, of course, would have none of this, for he was intent on going to worship God and to acquire the scriptures. The king then turned to Pilgrim who said to him, smiling, "To tell you the truth, if old monkey wanted to be a king, he would have been one throughout the myriad kingdoms in the world. But all of us are used to the leisurely and carefree existence of monks. If I become a king, I'll have to let my hair grow again; I'll be unable to retire when it's dark, nor will I be able to sleep beyond the hour of the fifth watch. I'll be anxious when reports from the borders arrive; I'll have endless worries when there are disasters or famines. How could I live with these things? So, you may as well be the king, and we'll continue to be monks to cultivate our merit." After pleading with them bitterly to no avail, the king had no choice but to ascend the treasure hall once more to face south and resume the use of the royal "we." After giving a general pardon throughout his empire, he also bestowed huge rewards on the monks of the Precious Grove Monastery before they left. Then he opened up the eastern palace to give a banquet to honour the Tang Monk; at the same time, painters were summoned into the palace to make portraits of the four pilgrims, so that these could be permanently revered in the Hall of Golden Chimes.

After they had securely established the kingdom, master and disciples, reluctant to stay too long, were about to take leave of the throne to face the West. The king, the queen, the prince, and all their subjects took out the crown treasures together with gold, silver, and silk to present to the master as tokens of gratitude but Tripitaka refused to accept any of these. All he wanted was to have his travel rescript certified so that he could tell Wukong and his brothers to saddle the horse and leave. Feeling very keenly that he had not expressed his gratitude in an adequate manner, the king called for his imperial chariot and invited the Tang Monk to sit in it. The two rows of civil and military officials were told to lead the way in front while he, the prince, and the ladies of the three palaces pushed the chariot themselves. Only after they had gone out of the city wall was the Tang Monk permitted to descend from the dragon chariot to take leave. "O Master," said the king, "when you've reached the Western Heaven and retrace your steps with your scriptures, you must pay our region a visit."

"Your disciple obeys you," said Tripitaka.

The king went back to the city tearfully with his subjects. The Tang Monk and his three disciples again took up the labyrinthine path, their minds intent only on saluting at the Spirit Mountain. It was now the season of late autumn and early winter, and they saw *frost blighting the maples to make each forest sparse and rain-ripened millet, plenty everywhere. Warmed by the sun, summit plums spread their morning hues; rocked by the wind, mountain bamboos voice their chilly plaint.* After they left the Black Rooster Kingdom, master and disciples journeyed during the day and rested at night; they had been on the road for more than half a month when they came upon another tall mountain, truly Heaven-touching and sun-obstructing. Growing alarmed on the horse, Tripitaka quickly pulled in his reins to call Pilgrim. "What do you want to say, Master?" asked Pilgrim.

"Look at that huge mountain with those rugged cliffs before us," said Tripitaka. "You must take caution and be on your guard, for I fear that some deviate creature all of a sudden will come to attack me again."

"Just get moving," said Pilgrim with a chuckle. "Don't be suspicious. Old monkey's his defence."

The elder had to banish his worries and urged his horse to enter the mountain that was truly rugged. See *whether tall or not, 'its top reaches the blue sky; whether deep or not, a stream with depth like Hell down there. Before the mountain are often seen rings of white clouds rising and boiling waves of dark fog; red plums and jade-like bamboos; verdant cedars and green pines; behind the mountain are soul-rending cliffs ten thousand yards deep behind which are strange, grotesque, demon-hiding caves in which water drips down from rocks drop by drop, leading to a winding, twisting brooklet down below. See also fruit-bearing apes prancing, leaping, deer with horns forked, zigzagged; dull and dumbly staring antelopes; tigers climbing the hills to seek their dens at night; dragons churning the waves to leave their lairs at dawn. When steps at the cave's entrance snap and crackle, the fowls dart up with wings loudly beating. Look also at these beasts pawing noisily through the woods. When you see this horde of birds and beasts, you'll be stricken with heart-pounding fear. The Due-to-Fall Cave faces the Due-to-Fall Cave; the cave facing the Due-to-Fall Cave faces a god. Green rocks are dyed like a thousand pieces of jade; blue-green gauze enshrouds ten thousand piles of mist.* As master and disciples became more and more apprehensive, they saw a red cloud rising up from the fold of the mountain ahead of them; after it reached mid-air, it condensed and took on the appearance of a fireball. Greatly alarmed, Pilgrim ran forward to catch hold of 1 of the Tang Monk's legs and pulled him from the horse, crying, "Brothers, stop! A monster's approaching!"

8 Rules and Sand-monk quickly took out their muckrake and precious staff and surrounded the Tang Monk. Let us now tell you that there was indeed a monster-spirit inside the ball of red light. Several years ago he heard people saying that the Tang Monk sent from the Land of the East to acquire scriptures from the Western Heaven was the disciple of the elder, Gold Cicada, a good man who had practiced austerities for ten existences. Any person who could taste a piece of his flesh, they said, would be able to prolong his life until it became the same as Heaven and Earth. Every morning, therefore, he waited in the mountain, and suddenly he found that the pilgrim had arrived. As he watched in mid-air, he saw that the Tang Monk beside the horse was surrounded by three disciples, all ready to fight. Marvelling to himself, the spirit said, "Dear monk! This white-faced, chubby cleric riding a horse was just coming into my view, when all of a sudden these three ugly monks had him surrounded. Look at them! Everyone is rolling up his sleeves, stretching out his fists and wielding his weapon – as if he is about to fight with someone. Aha! One of them with some perception, I suppose, must have recognised me. Well, if it's going to be like this, it'll be difficult for anyone trying to get a taste of the Tang Monk's flesh." As he thought to himself, questioning his mind with mind like that, he said, "If I try to overpower them, I may not even get near them but if I try to use the good to deceive them, I may succeed. As long as I'm able to beguile their minds, I can trick them even with the good. Then I'll catch them for sure. Let me go down and tease them a little."

Dear monster! He made the red light disperse and lowered his cloud toward the fold of the mountain. Shaking his body, he changed immediately into a little mischievous boy, about seven years of age and completely naked who was bound by a rope and suspended from the top of a pine tree. "Help! Help!" he cried without ceasing.

We're just telling you about the Great Sage Sun who raised his head and found that the red cloud had completely dissipated and the flames all vanished. He therefore said, "Master, please mount up again for the journey."

"You just told us that there was a fiend approaching," said the Tang Monk. "Do we dare proceed now?"

"A little while ago," said Pilgrim, "I saw a red cloud rising up from the ground, and by the time it reached mid-air, it condensed into a flaming ball of fire. It had to be a monster-spirit. But now the red cloud has dissipated, and so it must be a monster who's a passer-by and who does not dare harm people. Let's go."

"Elder Brother is truly clever with words," said 8 Rules, chuckling. "Even monster-spirits can be passers-by!"

"How would you know?" asked Pilgrim. "If some demon king of a certain cave in a certain mountain has sent out invitations to spirits of sundry mountains and caves to attend a festival, monster-spirits from all quarters – north, south, east, and west – would respond. Perhaps he's just interested in going to the festival and not in harming people. That's a monster-spirit who's a passer-by."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he was only half-convinced but he had little alternative other than to climb on his saddle to journey into the mountain. As they proceeded, they heard suddenly repeated cries of "Help!" Highly startled, the elder said, "O Disciples! Who's calling out in the midst of this mountain?" Pilgrim walked forward and said to him, "Master, keep moving. Don't harp on such things as human carriage, 'donkey carriage, open carriage, or reclining carriage. Even if there were a carriage in a place like this, there'd be no one to carry you."

"I'm not talking about carriages," said the Tang Monk. "I'm referring to someone calling us."

"I know," said Pilgrim with laughter, "but mind your own business. Let's move on."

Tripitaka agreed and urged his horse forward once more. Before they had travelled a mile, they heard again the call, "Help!"

"Disciple," said the elder, "the sound of this call can't be that of a demon or a goblin, for if it were, there would be no echo. Just listen to it: there was a call a moment ago, and now we've another one. It must have come from a man in dire difficulty. Let's go and help him." Pilgrim said, "Master, please put away your compassion just for today! When we've crossed this mountain, you can be compassionate then. If you know those stories about strange plants and possessed vegetation, you'd know that everything can become a spirit. In most cases, they may not be too dangerous but if you'd run into something like a python that has become an evil spirit after prolonged self-cultivation, you'd be in trouble. A spirit like that can even possess knowledge of a person's nickname. If he should call out, hiding in the bushes or in the fold of the mountain, a person may get by if he does not answer him but if he does answer, the spirit can snatch away his primal soul, or he can follow that person and take his life that night. Let's get away! Let's get away! As the ancients said, 'If you escape, just thank the gods.' Please don't listen to this call."

The elder had little alternative but to agree and he whipped his horse to go forward. Pilgrim thought to himself, "I wonder where this brazen fiend is hollering. Let old monkey give him a taste of 'Cancer in opposition to Capricornus' so that the two will never meet." Dear Great Sage! He said to Sand-monk, "Hold on to the horse and walk slowly. Old monkey's going to take a leak." Look at him! He let the Tang Monk walk slightly ahead and then recited a spell to exercise the magic of shortening the ground and moving the mountain. He pointed his golden-hooped rod backward once, and master and disciples immediately went past the peak of the mountain, leaving behind the fiendish creature. In big strides, the Great Sage caught up with the Tang Monk and they proceeded. Just then Tripitaka heard again a call coming from the mountain behind him, crying "Help!"

The elder said, "O Disciple! That person in adversity truly has no affinity for he's not run into any of us. We must've passed him for you can hear that he is crying out from the mountain behind us."

"Or he may be still ahead of us," said 8 Rules, "but perhaps the wind's changed."

"Never mind whether the wind has changed or not," said Pilgrim. "Just keep moving."

As a result, everyone fell silent and concentrated on trying to pass the mountain. The monster-spirit in the mountain valley cried out 3 or 4 times but no one appeared. He thought to himself, "When I saw the Tang Monk just now, he couldn't have been more than three miles away. I've been waiting for him all this time. Why hasn't he arrived? Could it be that he had taken another road down the mountain?" Shaking his body, he loosened the rope at once and mounted the red light once more to rise into the air. Unwittingly the Great Sage Sun was looking back with head upturned, and when he saw the light, he knew that it was the fiendish creature. Once more he grabbed the legs of the Tang Monk and pushed him off the horse, crying, "Brothers, take care! Take care! That monster-spirit is approaching again!"

8 Rules and Sand-monk were so alarmed that they wielded their rake and staff to surround the Tang Monk as before. When that spirit saw what happened in mid-air, he could not stop marvelling, saying to himself, "Dear monks! I just saw that white-faced priest riding on the horse. How is it that he is now surrounded again by the three of them? Now I realise, after what I've seen, that I must overthrow the one who has perception before I can seize the Tang Monk. If not, *my exertions are vain for I can't get my thing; my efforts notwithstanding, all is nothing!*"

He lowered his cloud and transforming himself as before, he hung himself high on top of a pine tree. This time however, he positioned himself only about half a mile away. The Great Sage Sun when he raised his head and found that the red cloud had dispersed, requested once more that his master mount up and proceed. "You just told us that the monster-spirit was approaching again," said Tripitaka. "Why do you ask me to move on?" Pilgrim said, "This monster-spirit is a passer-by. He doesn't dare bother us." The elder grew angry and said, "You brazen ape! You're just playing with me! When there is a demon, you say it's nothing. But when we're in this peaceful region, you're out to frighten me, yelling all the time about a monster-spirit. There's more falsehood than truth in your words,



and without regard for good or ill, you grab my legs and throw me off the horse. Now you come up with an explanation about this monster-spirit who's a so-called passer-by! If I got hurt from the fall, would you be able to live with yourself? You, you..."

"Please don't be offended, Master," said Pilgrim. "If your hands and feet got hurt from the fall, we'd still take care of you but if you're abducted by a monster-spirit where would we go to look for you?" Enraged, Tripitaka would have recited the Tight-Fillet Spell had not Sand-monk desperately pleaded with him. Finally he mounted his horse and proceeded once more.

Before he could even sit properly on the saddle he heard another cry: "Master, please help me!" As he looked up, the elder found that it came from a little child, completely naked who was suspended on top of a tree. He pulled in the reins and began to berate Pilgrim, saying, "You wretched ape! How villainous you're! You don't have the tiniest bit of kindness in you! Every thought of yours is bent on making mischief and working violence! I told you that it was a human voice calling for help but you've to spend countless words to claim it was a monster. Look! Isn't that a person hanging on the tree?" Seeing how the master was putting the blame on him and also the form before his face, the Great Sage lowered his head and dared not reply, for there was nothing he could do at the moment and he was afraid that his master would recite the Tight-Fillet Spell. He had little choice, in fact but to permit the Tang Monk to approach the tree. Pointing with his whip, the elder asked, "Which household do you belong to, child? Why are you hung here? Tell me, so that I can rescue you."

Alas! Clearly this is a monster-spirit who has transformed himself in this manner but that master is a man of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, completely unable to recognise what he saw.

When that demon heard the question, he became even bolder in his chicanery. With tears welling up in his eyes, he said, "O Master! West of this mountain there is a Withered Pine Brook, by the side of which there is a village where my family is located. My grandpa's name is Red, and because he has amassed a huge fortune, he was given the name Red Millions. He has however, been dead for a long time after having lived to a ripe old age, and his estate was left to my dad. Recent business reversals have gradually fibbed away our possessions, and my dad for that reason has changed his name to Red Thousands. He has been befriending many men of valour, to whom he had lent gold and silver with the hope of reaping some profits. Little did he realise that these were all rootless men out to swindle him, and he lost both principal and interest. My dad therefore vowed that he would never lend out another penny but those borrowers, after having squandered what they had, banded together and plundered our house in broad daylight, holding lit torches and staffs. Not only did they rob us of all our money and possessions but they killed my dad also. And when they saw that my mum was somewhat attractive, they decided to abduct her and take her with them to be some kind of camp lady. Unwilling to abandon me, my mum carried me along in her bosom and, weeping, followed the thieves to this mountain where they wanted to kill me also. Fortunately, my mum pleaded with them and I was spared the knife; I was tied with ropes and hung here to die of hunger and exposure instead. I don't know what sort of merit I've accumulated in another existence that brings me the luck of meeting Master here. If you're willing to be compassionate and save my life so that I can return home, I'll try to repay your kindness even if I've to sell myself. Even when the yellow sand covers my face, I'll not forget your kindness."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he thought they were the truth and immediately asked 8 Rules to loosen the ropes and rescue the child. Not knowing any better either, Idiot was about to act when Pilgrim on one side could not restrain himself any longer. "You brazen thing!" he shouted. "There's someone here who recognises you! Don't think you can use your humbuggery to hoodwink people! If your possessions were stolen, if your dad was killed and your mum taken by thieves, to whom would we entrust you once we rescued you? With what would you thank us? Your fables don't add up!" When the fiend heard these words, he became frightened, realising that the Great Sage was an able man to be reckoned with. Trembling all over, the fiend spoke as tears flowed down his face, "Master, though my parents are lost and gone, and though the wealth of our family is reduced to nothing, I still have some land and relatives."

"What sort of relatives do you've?" asked Pilgrim. The fiend said, "The household of my maternal family lives south of this mountain while my aunts reside north of the peak. Li Four at the head of the brook is the husband of my mum's sister, and Red Three in the forest is a distant uncle. I've, moreover, several cousins living here and there in the village. If Venerable Master is willing to save me and take me to see these relatives at the village, I'll certainly give them a thorough account of your kindness, and you'll be handsomely rewarded when we sell some of our land."

When 8 Rules heard what he said, he pushed Pilgrim aside, saying, "Elder Brother, this is only a child! Why keep on interrogating him? What he told us was that the thieves had robbed them of their liquid assets. They couldn't take their houses and land, could they? If he will speak to his relatives, we may have huge appetites but we can't eat up the price of ten acres of land. Let's cut him down." Idiot, of course, thought only of food; he had no further regard for good or ill, and using the ritual razor, he ripped open the ropes to free the fiend. Facing the Tang Monk tearfully, the fiend knelt beneath the horse and kept on respecting. A compassionate man, the elder called out, "Child, get up on the horse. I'll take you there."

"O Master," said the fiend, "my hands and feet are numb from the hanging, and my torso hurts. Moreover, I'm a rural person and not used to riding horses." The Tang Monk at once asked 8 Rules to carry him but the fiend, after glancing at Idiot, said, "Master, my skin is frostbitten, and I dare not let myself be carried by this master. He has such a long mouth and large ears, and the hard bristles behind his head can be frightfully prickly!"

"Let Sand-monk carry you then," said the Tang Monk. After glancing at him also, the fiend said, "Master, when those robbers came to plunder our house, each one of them had his face painted; they wore false beards and they held knives and staffs. I was terribly frightened by them, and now when I see this master with such a gloomy complexion, I'm even more intimidated. I just don't dare to ask him to carry me." The Tang Monk therefore told Pilgrim Sun to put the fiend on his back. Laughing uproariously, Pilgrim said, "I'll carry him! I'll carry him!"

Secretly pleased, the fiendish creature gave himself willingly to Pilgrim to carry. When Pilgrim pulled him up from the side of the road to test his weight, he found that the fiend weighed no more than 3 catties and ten ounces. "You audacious fiend!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "You deserve to die today! How dare you pull tricks before old monkey? I recognise you to be *that something*."

"I'm the offspring of a good family," said the fiend, "and it's my misfortune to face this great ordeal. What do you mean by *that something*?"

"If you're an offspring of a good family," said Pilgrim, "why are your bones so light?"

"They are small," said the fiend. "How old are you now?" said Pilgrim, and the fiend said, "I'm seven years old."

"Even if you put on only one catty of weight per year," said Pilgrim, "you'd now weigh seven catties. How is it that you're not even a full four catties?"

"I didn't get enough milk when I was a baby," said the fiend.

Pilgrim said, "All right, I'll carry you but if you want to piss, you must tell me." Tripitaka then walked in front with 8 Rules and Sand-monk while Pilgrim followed behind with the child on his back. As they proceeded toward the West, a poem as a testimony says:

*Though virtue's lofty, demonic blocks are high. Chan promotes stillness but stillness breeds fiends.  
Lord of the Mind's upright, he takes the middle way; Wood Mum's naughty, he walks a wayward path.  
Horse of the Will's silent, nursing want and greed; Yellow Dame's wordless, feeling his unease.  
Guest-Error succeeds but his joys are vain – they'll at last be melted by the Right.*

As the Great Sage Sun carried the demon on his back, he began to brood over his resentment toward the Tang Monk, thinking to himself, "Master truly does not know how difficult it is to traverse this rugged mountain; it's hard enough to do so when you're empty-handed but he has to ask old monkey to carry someone else, not to mention a fellow who's a monster no less. Even if he were a good man, it would be worthless to carry him along, since he had already lost both parents. To whom would we carry him? I might as well smash him dead!" At once the fiendish creature became aware of what Pilgrim was thinking and he, therefore, resorted to magic: taking four deep breaths from the four quarters, he blew them onto the back of Pilgrim, and his bearer immediately felt as if a weight of a thousand pounds were on him. "My child," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "you're using the heavy-body magic to crush your venerable dad?" When the fiend heard those words, he became afraid that the Great Sage might harm him. He liberated himself from his corpse and his primal soul rose into the air and stood there while the weight on Pilgrim's back grew heavier. Growing angry, the Monkey King grabbed the body on his back and hurled it against some rocks at the side of the road; the body was reduced to a meat patty. Fearing that it would still be resistant, Pilgrim tore off the four limbs and smashed them to pieces, also by the road.

When the fiend saw clearly what happened in mid-air, he could not restrain the fire leaping up in his heart saying to himself, "This monkey monk! How villainous of him! Even if I'm a demon plotting to harm your master, I've yet to raise my hand. How'd you seek to inflict on me such injury? It's a good thing that I've enough foresight to leave with my spirit; otherwise, I'd have unwittingly lost my life. I might as well make use of this opportunity to seize the Tang Monk for if I delay any further, he might get even smarter." *Dear monster!* He at once caused to rise in mid-air a truly fierce whirlwind that threw up rocks and kicked up dirt. *Marvellous wind! Angry it whipped up clouds and waters rank as rising black ether blotted out the sun. All summit trees were pulled out by their roots; wild plums were wholly levelled with their branches. Yellow sand dimmed the eyes, so men could not walk. Strange rocks battered the road, how could it be smooth? It churned and tossed to darken all the plains while birds and beasts howled throughout this whole mount.* The wind blew until Tripitaka could hardly stay on the horse, until 8 Rules refused to look up and Sand-monk lowered his head and covered his face. Only the Great Sage Sun knew that it was a wind sent up by the fiend but when he ran forward to try to catch up with the others, the fiend riding on the head of the wind had already caught hold of the Tang Monk and whisked him away. Instantly they vanished without a trace, so that there was no way for the disciples to know even where to look for them. In a little while, the wind began to subside and sunlight appeared once more. Pilgrim walked forward and saw that the white dragon horse was still trembling and neighing uncontrollably. The load of luggage was thrown by the road, 8 Rules lay sprawled beneath a ledge moaning, and Sand-monk was making noises while crouching on the slope. "Eight Rules!" shouted Pilgrim.

When Idiot heard the voice of Pilgrim and looked up, the violent wind had calmed. He scrambled up and tugged at Pilgrim saying, "O Elder Brother, what a terrific wind!"

Sand-monk also came up and said, "Elder Brother, this is a whirlwind." Then he asked, "Where's Master?"

8 Rules said, "The wind's so strong that we all hid our heads and covered our eyes, each trying to find shelter. Master seemed to have put his head down also on the saddle."

"But where is he now?" asked Pilgrim.

"He must have been made of straw," said Sand-monk, "and got blown away!"

Pilgrim said, "Brothers, it's time for us to disband."

"Exactly," said 8 Rules, "while there's still time. It's better for each of us to find our own way off. The journey to the Western Heaven is endless and limitless! When will we ever get there?" When Sand-monk heard these words, he was so shocked that his whole body began to turn numb. "Elder Brother," he said, "how could you say something like that? Because we committed crimes in our previous lives, we're lucky to be enlightened by the Nun Guanshiyin who touched our heads, gave us the commandments, and changed our names so that we'd embrace the Religious fruit. We willingly accepted the commission to protect the Tang Monk and follow him to the Western Heaven to worship God and acquire scriptures, so that our merits would cancel out our sins. Today we're here and everything seems to come to an end abruptly when you can talk about each of us finding our own way off, for then we'd mar the good fruits of the Nun and destroy our virtuous act. Moreover, we'd provoke the scorn of others, saying that we know how to start but not how to finish."

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "what you say is right, of course but what are we to do with Master who refuses to listen to people? I, old monkey, can with this pair of fiery eyes and diamond pupils discern good and evil. Just now this wind was called up by that child hanging on the tree, for I'd tell that he was a monster-spirit. But you didn't know, nor did Master; all of you thought that he was an offspring of some good family and told me to carry him along instead. Old monkey was planning to take care of him when he tried to crush me with the heavy-body magic. Then I smashed his body to pieces but he resorted to the magic of the liberation of the corpse and kidnapped Master with the whirlwind. Because Master so frequently refused to listen to my words, I became terribly discouraged and that was why I said we'd disband. Now that you, Worthy Brother, have shown such faithfulness, old monkey finds it difficult to make up his mind. Well, 8 Rules, what exactly do you want to do?" 8 Rules said, "I was stupid enough just now to mouth some foolish words but we truly should not disband. We've no choice really, Elder Brother but to listen to Younger Brother Sand and try to find the monster and save Master." Brightening up all at once, Pilgrim said, "Brothers, we'll unite our minds to do what we must; after we've picked up the luggage and the horse, we'll ascend this mountain to find the monster and save Master."

Pulling at creepers and vines, descending into ravines and crossing streams, the three of them journeyed for some seventy miles without turning up anything. That mountain did not have a single bird or beast, though old cedars and pines were often sighted. Growing more and more anxious, the Great Sage Sun leaped up to the summit with a bound and shouted, "Change!" He changed into someone with three heads and six arms, just as he did when he caused great disturbance in Heaven. Waving the golden-hooped rod once, he changed it into three rods that he wielded and began to strike out madly in both directions of east and west. When 8 Rules saw him, he said, "Sand-monk, this is bad! Elder Brother is so mad because he can't find Master that he's having a fit."

After a while, the mock combat of Pilgrim brought out a band of indigent deities, all dressed in rags; their breeches had no seats and their trousers had no cuffs. Kneeling before the mountain, they cried, "Great Sage, the mountain gods and the local spirits are here to see you." Pilgrim said, "How is it that there are so many mountain gods and local spirits?" Respecting, the various deities said, "Let us report to the Great Sage, this mountain has the name of Roaring Mountain of the Six-Hundred-Mile Awl-Head Peak.<sup>4</sup> There are one mountain god and one local spirit for each ten-mile distance; altogether we've, therefore, thirty mountain gods and thirty local spirits. We heard yesterday already that the Great Sage had arrived but since we'd not assemble all at once, we're tardy in our reception and caused the Great Sage to be angry. Please pardon us."

"I'll pardon you for the moment," said Pilgrim, "but let me ask how many monster-spirits there are in this mountain?"

"O Dad!" said the deities, "there's only one monster-spirit, and he has just about worn our heads bald! He has been such a plague that we've little incense and no paper money, and we're completely without offerings. Every one of us has hardly enough clothes to wear and food for our mouths. How many more monster-spirits could we stand?" Pilgrim said, "Where is this monster-spirit living, before or behind the mountain?"

"Neither place," said the deities, "for in this mountain is a stream that has the name of Dried Pine Stream. By the stream is a cave that has the name of Fiery Cloud Cave. In the cave there is a demon king of vast magic powers who frequently abducts us local spirits and mountain gods there to do such menial tasks for him as tending fire, guarding the door, beating the rattle, and shouting passwords at night. The little fiends under him also ask us frequently for payola."

"You're the mortals of the Region of Darkness," said Pilgrim. "Where would you've money?"

"Exactly," said the deities. "We don't have any money to give them, and all we can do is to catch a few mountain antelopes or wild deer to pay off this gang of spirits now and then. If we don't have any presents for them, they will come to wreck our temples and strip our garments, giving us such harassment that we can't possibly lead a peaceful existence. We beseech the Great Sage to stamp out this monster for us and rescue the various living creatures on this mountain."

"If all of you're under his thumb so that you've to be in his cave frequently," said Pilgrim, "you must know the name of this monster-spirit and where he is from."

"When we speak of him," said the deities, "perhaps even the Great Sage knows of his origin. He is the son of the Bull Demon King, reared by Demoness. After he had practiced self-cultivation at the Blazing Flame Mountain for three centuries, he perfected the true fire of Fixity and his magic powers were great indeed. The Bull Demon King told him to come and guard this Roaring Mountain; his childhood name is Red Boy but his fancy title is Great King Holy Child."

Highly pleased by what he heard, Pilgrim dismissed the local spirits and mountain gods and changed back into his original form. Leaping down from the summit, he said to 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "Brothers, you may relax. No need to worry anymore. Master won't be harmed, for the monster-spirit is related to old monkey."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules with a laugh, "don't lie! You grew up in the East East-Videha Continent but this place here belongs to the West Aparagodāniya Continent. The distance is great, separated by ten thousand waters and a thousand hills, and by at least two oceans. How could he be related to you?" Pilgrim said, "Just now this bunch of deities that appeared to me happen to be the local spirits and mountain gods of this region. When I questioned them on the origin of the monster, they told me that he was the son of the Bull Demon King reared by Demoness. His name is Red Boy, and he also has the fancy title of Great King Holy Child. I remember that when old monkey caused great disturbance in Heaven five centuries ago, I made a grand tour at the time of the famous mountains in the world to search for the heroes of this great Earth. The Bull Demon King at one time joined old monkey and others to form a fraternal alliance of seven; of the some five or six demon kings in this alliance, only old monkey was quite small in size. That was the reason why we addressed the Bull Demon King as big brother. Since this monster-spirit is the son of the Bull Demon King who is an acquaintance of mine, I'd be regarded as his old uncle if we begin to talk about relations. How would he dare harm my master? Let's get to his place quickly."

With laughter, Sand-monk said, "O Elder Brother! As the proverb says, *three years not showing at the door, a relative's one no more*. You're parted from him for five, perhaps six centuries; you've not even drunk a cup of juice with him, nor have you exchanged invitations or seasonal gifts. How could he possibly think of himself as your relative?"

"How could you measure people this way?" said Pilgrim. "As the proverb says, *if lotus leaf can to the ocean flow where'd people not meet as they come and go*? Even if he doesn't admit the fact that we're relatives, it will still be unlikely that he would harm my Master. If we don't expect him to give us a banquet, we most certainly may expect him to return to us the Tang Monk whole."

So, the three brothers in all earnestness led the horse that carried the luggage on its back, and found the main road to proceed. Without stopping night or day, they came upon a pine forest after having travelled for over a hundred miles. Inside the forest was a winding brook in which clear green water swiftly flowed. At the head of the brook there was a stone-slab bridge that led directly up to the entrance of a cave dwelling. "Brothers," said Pilgrim, "look at that craggy cliff over there with all those rocks. It must be the home of the monster-spirit. Let me discuss the matter with you: which of you is going to stand and guard the luggage and the horse, and which of you'll follow me to subdue the fiend?"

8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, Old bull can't sit still for too long. Let me go with you."

"Fine! Fine!" said Pilgrim. "Sand-monk, hide the luggage and the horse deep in the forest, and guard them carefully. The two of us will go up there to search for Master." Sand-monk agreed; 8 Rules then followed Pilgrim to move forward, each of them holding his weapon. Truly *the child is not smelted and demonic fire triumphs but Wood-Mum and Mind-Monkey have mutual support*.

## 041

### Mind-Monkey's defeated by fire; Wood-Mum's captured by demons

*Good and evil – a moment's false thoughts; shame and honour, neither concerns you.*

*Failure or success, let it come and go; live as you need within your lot.*

*Composed, you've peace deep and lasting; muddled, you're besieged by demons.*

*5 Phases hobbled wreck the grove of Chan, certain as rising wind's frigid.<sup>1</sup>*

The Great Sage Sun who took leave of Sand-monk along with 8 Rules. Leaping over the Dried Pine Stream, they went before a cliff full of strange rocks and discovered that there was indeed a cave dwelling. The scenery all around was most unusual. See *a winding old path silent and remote; even wind and moon heed the black cranes reciting. White clouds part and the river's full of light; water flows past a bridge – what a scene divine. Apes and birds call amid rare flowers and plants and rocks entwined by creepers and orchids fair. The cliff's rustling green scatters mist and smoke; verdant pines and bamboos the phoenix beckon. Distant summits rise like vertical screens. Fronting stream and mountain's a true divine cave, its source coming from the Kunlun ranges to be enjoyed only by one ordained*. When they went up to the entrance of the cave, they found a slab of stone on which an inscription was written in large letters:

Fiery Cloud Cave, Dried Pine Stream, Roaring Mountain

Before the entrance was a mob of little imps prancing around with swords and spears. In a loud voice, the Great Sage Sun cried out, "You punks! Go quickly and report this to your cave master. Tell him to send out our Tang Monk at once, so that the lives of all these spirits in your cave may be spared. If you whisper but half a 'No,' I'll overturn your residence and level your cave!" When those little fiends heard these words, they turned and dashed inside the cave, slamming shut the two doors of stone. Then they ran to make this report: "Great King, disaster!"

We now tell you about that fiend who captured Tripitaka and brought him back to the cave. The monk was stripped of his garments, bull-tied with all four limbs behind his back, and left in the rear yard. The little fiends were ordered to scrub him clean with water so that he might be steamed and eaten. When the announcement of disaster was suddenly heard, the demons stopped their activities and went to the front to ask, "What disaster is there?"

"A monk with a hairy face and a thunder-god beak," said one of the little fiends, "leading another monk with large ears and long horn, is demanding the return of their master, someone by the name of the Tang Monk, in front of our cave. If we but whisper half a 'No,' they said, they would overturn our residence and level our cave." Smiling scornfully, the demon king said, "These two happen to be Pilgrim Sun and Bullseye 8 Rules. They truly know where to look! From the spot halfway in the mountain where I caught their master to our place is a distance of some one hundred and fifty miles. How did they manage to find our door so quickly?" He then gave this order: "Little ones, those of you who look after the carts, push them out!"

Several of the little fiends opened the door and pushed out five small carts. When he saw them, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, these monster-spirits must be afraid of us. They have hauled out their carts to move to another place."

"No," said Pilgrim, "look at the way they are placing the carts over there."

The little fiends indeed placed the carts at five locations corresponding to the 5 Phases of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth; 5 of the fiends stood guard beside the carts while 5 others went inside around to make their report. "Everything set?" asked the demon king.

"All-set," they replied.

"Bring me my lance," he ordered.

Those fiends who looked after weapons had two of them carry out an 18-foot fire-tipped lance to hand over to the monster king. With no other armour except a battle kilt of embroidered silk and with naked feet, the monster king took up the lance and walked outside. When Pilgrim and 8 Rules raised their heads to look, they found a fiendish creature who had *a face as if it had been powdered white and lips so ruddy, they seemed brushed with paint. No dye could create such dark, lovely hair; his eyebrows curved like new moons carved with knives. Phoenix and dragon coiled on his battle kilt; huskier than Nata's a frame he had. With air imposing he lifted up his lance and walked out the door, swathed in hallowed light. He roared like thunder in the time of spring; his striking eyes flashed like lightning bright. If one would know his true identity, remember Red Boy, a name of lasting fame*. After that Red Boy monster had emerged from the door, he shouted, "Who's here making all these noises?"

Smiling as he drew near, Pilgrim said, "My worthy nephew! Stop fooling around! This morning when you're hung high on top of a pine tree by the mountain road, you presented yourself as a thin, frightened boy with jaundice and deceived my master. I carried you on my back with all good intention, you know but you used a little wind to abduct my master here. Even though you appear before me now like this, you think I can't recognise you? You might as well send my master out quickly. Stop behaving like a callow youth and take care not to upset the feelings of kinship. For I fear that if your dad gets wind of this, he might blame old monkey for oppressing youth with age, and that wouldn't be quite right."

Enraged by the words he heard, the fiend shouted back, "You brazen ape! What feelings of kinship do I share with you? What sort of balderdash are you mouthing around here? Who's your worthy nephew?"

"O brother!" said Pilgrim. "You'd not know, would you? At the time when your dad and I became bond-brothers, we didn't even know where you're."

"This ape is babbling more nonsense!" said the fiend. "Where do you come from, and where do I come from? Think about this! How could my dad and you become bond-brothers?"

"Of course, you'd not know about this," said Pilgrim. "I'm Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who greatly disturbed the Heavenly Palace five centuries ago. But before I caused such disturbance, I made extensive tours of all the Four Great Continents and there's not a spot on Earth or in Heaven that I didn't set foot on for I was most eager to befriend all the valiant and heroic persons. Your dad, the Bull Monster King called himself the Great Sage, Parallel with Heaven. He and old monkey formed a fraternal alliance of seven and we all made him the big brother.<sup>2</sup> There're also a Dragon Monster King who called himself the Great Sage covering the Ocean and became the second brother; a Garuda Monster King who called himself Great Sage United with Heaven, and became the third brother; a Lion Monster King who called himself the Great Sage Mover of Mountains, and became the fourth brother; a Female Monkey King who called herself the Fair Wind Great Sage and became the fifth member; and a Giant Ape Monster King who called himself a god-Routing Great Sage and became the sixth brother. Old monkey, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven's rather small in size and so he's number seven. At the time when we old brothers were having fun, you're not even born!" Refusing to believe a word he heard, the fiend lifted up his fire-tipped lance to stab at Pilgrim. An expert would not be exercised as they said and Pilgrim at once stepped aside to dodge the blow before striking out with his iron rod, yelling at the same time, "You little beast! You don't know what's good for you! Watch my rod!"

The monster-spirit also parried the blow, yelling at the same time, "Brazen ape! You're so ignorant of the ways of the world! Watch my lance!" The 2 of them thus refused to give any consideration for kinship relation; changing colours all at once, they used their magic and leaped to the edge of the clouds. *What a fight!*

*Pilgrim enjoyed great fame; the demon king had vast powers. 1 raised up the golden-hooped rod sideways; 1 lunged forward with the fire-tipped lance. Mist spread out to shroud the 3 Regions; clouds spewed forth to hide the four quarters. Violent air and savage noise did fill the sky; the sun, the moon, the stars – all lost their light. Not one kind word was spoken, they felt such hatred and scorn. That 1's contempt made him lose all manners; this 1's wrath killed all regard for relations. The rod struck with increasing might; the lance came with growing fury. 1 was the primordial, true Great Sage; 1 was Child Sudhana<sup>3</sup> of the right fruit. They drove themselves, each trying hard to win, all for the Tang Monk who would greet the religion king*. The demon and the Great Sage Sun fought for more than 20 rounds without reaching a decision. Standing on 1 side, Bullseye 8 Rules saw clearly what was going on: although the monster-spirit was not about to be defeated, he was only parrying the blows left and right, and did not attack his opponent at all; and, although Pilgrim did not seem able to prevail all at once, he was after all such an adroit and skilful warrior that the rod back and forth never seemed to leave the vicinity of the monster's head. 8 Rules thought to himself, "That's good! Pilgrim's so tricky! He'd fake something and deceive the demon into drawing closer. One blow of that iron rod then would wipe out my chance of making any merit!" *Look at him!*

He roused his spirit, lifted up his 9-pronged rake, and brought it down hard on the monster-spirit's head. Terrified by what he saw, the fiend quickly turned around and fled, dragging his lance behind him. "Chase him! Chase him!" shouted Pilgrim to 8 Rules.

The two of them gave chase up to the entrance of the cave where they saw the monster-spirit standing in one of the five carts, the one set up in the middle. With one hand he held on to his fire-tipped lance; with the other fist, he gave his own nose a couple of punches. Laughing, 8 Rules said, "Shame on him! This fellow's indulging in roguery! He wants to bust his own nose, make himself bleed a little, and smear his face red so that he may go somewhere to file suit against us." After that demon gave himself two punches, he recited a spell and immediately flames shot out from his mouth as thick smoke sprouted from his nose. In an instant, flames darted up from all five carts. The demon opened his mouth a few more times and a huge fire shot up to the sky, burning so fiercely that the entire Fiery Cloud Cave was hidden from sight by the flames and smoke. Horrified, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, it's getting sticky! Once we're caught in that fire, we're finished. Old bull will be roasted and after some spices are added, they can just enjoy me! Quickly! Run!"

He said he would run, and the next moment he had already crossed the stream without any regard for Pilgrim. Pilgrim however, had vast magic powers; making the fire-repellent sign by kneading together his fingers, he hurled himself into the fire to search for the fiend. When the fiend saw him approaching, he spat out a few more mouthfuls of flame and the fire grew even more intense.

*Marvellous fire! Torrid and fierce, a blaze reaching the sky; hot and brilliant, it reddens the whole earth. It's like a fiery wheel flying up and down and charcoals aglow dancing east and west. This fire is not from Suiren<sup>4</sup> drilling wood or from Laozi roasting cinnabar; it is not fire from Heaven, nor is it a wildfire. It's the realised Fixity fire<sup>5</sup> born of the demon's self-cultivation. The 5 carts conform to the 5 Phases that grow and transform to beget the flame. The liver's wood<sup>6</sup> can make the heart's fire strong; the heart's fire can calm the earth of the spleen; the spleen's earth begets metal that changes into water; water can beget wood, thus the magic's complete. Growth and transformation, all are caused by fire for all things flourish when fire fills the sky. <sup>7</sup>The fiend, long enlightened, summons Fixity. He rules the West forever as number 1.* Because the fire and smoke were so intense, Pilgrim could not even see the way before the cave's entrance and therefore he could not search for the fiend. Turning quickly, he leaped clear of the blaze at once. Having seen clearly what took place before his own cave, the monster-spirit retrieved his fire equipment after Pilgrim left, and led the various fiends back inside. After the stone doors were shut, the little fiends were told to prepare for a joyous victory celebration. Pilgrim vaulted over the Dried Pine Stream. As he dropped from the clouds, he heard 8 Rules and Sand-monk conversing loudly in the pine forest. "You idiot!" shouted Pilgrim as he approached 8 Rules. "You've not one whit of manliness! You'd be so terrified by the demonic fire that you'd abandon old monkey to flee for your own life. It's a good thing that I can still take care of myself!"

"Elder Brother," said Bullseye 8 Rules, chuckling, "what that monster-spirit said of you was certainly correct, for you truly are ignorant of the ways of the world. The ancients said, 'He who knows the ways of the world shall be called a hero.' The monster-spirit did not want to talk kinship with you but you insisted on presenting yourself as his kin. When he fought with you and let loose that kind of ruthless fire, you'd not run but still wanted to tangle with him."

"How's the fiend's ability compared with mine?" asked Pilgrim. "Not as good," said 8 Rules.

"How about his skill with the lance?"

"No good, either," said 8 Rules. "When Old bull saw that he had a hard time withstanding you, I came to lend you a little assistance with my rake. Little did I expect that he was so puny that he would retreat in defeat at once and start the fire in such an unconscionable way." Pilgrim said, "Indeed you'd not have stepped forward. I was about to find a way to give him a blow with my rod after a few more rounds. Wouldn't that have been better?" The two gave themselves entirely to discussing the ability of the monster-spirit and the viciousness of his fire but Sand-monk, leaning on the trunk of a pine tree, was laughing so hard that he could barely stand up.

"Brother," said Pilgrim, after he noticed him, "why are you laughing? If you had the ability to capture that demon and destroy his fire defence, that would be a benefit to all of us. As the proverb says, a few feathers will make a ball. If you'd seize the demon and rescue our master, it would be your great merit."

"I don't have that kind of ability," said Sand-monk, "nor can I subdue the fiend. But I'm laughing because both of you're so absentminded."

"What do you mean?" asked Pilgrim. Sand-monk said, "Neither the ability of that monster-spirit nor his skill with the lance can be a match for you but the only reason why you two cannot prevail against him is because of his fire. If I've anything to say about this, I'll say that you'd overcome him by mutual production and mutual conquest.<sup>8</sup> What's so difficult about that?"

When Pilgrim heard these words, he roared with laughter and said, "Brother, you're right! Indeed, we're absentminded, and we've forgotten about the whole matter. If we consider the principles of mutual production and mutual conquest, then it is water that can overcome fire. We must find water somewhere to put out this demonic fire. We'd be able to rescue Master then, wouldn't we?"

"Exactly," said Sand-monk. "No need for further delay." Pilgrim said, "Stay here, the two of you but don't fight with him. Let old monkey go to the Great Eastern Ocean and request some dragon soldiers to come with water. After we've put out the demonic fire, we'll rescue Master."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "feel free to go. We can look after ourselves here."

Dear Great Sage! Mounting the clouds to leave that place, he arrived at the Eastern Ocean in a moment. He was too busy however, to linger and enjoy the scenery; using the water-division magic, he opened up a pathway for himself through the waves. As he proceeded, he ran into a *Nature spirit* on patrol. When the *Nature spirit* saw that it was the Great Sage Sun, he went quickly back to the Water-Crystal Palace to report to the old Dragon King. Aoguang immediately led the dragon sons and grandsons together with shrimp soldiers and crab lieutenants to meet his visitor outside the gate. Pilgrim was invited to take a seat inside and also tea. "No need for tea," said Pilgrim, "but I do have a matter that will cause you some trouble. My master who's on his way to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God, happens to be passing through the Fiery Cloud Cave at the Dried Pine Stream of the Roaring Mountain. A Red Boy monster-spirit with the fancy title of the Great King, Holy Child, has captured my master. When old monkey made his search up to his door and fought with him, he let out some fire which we'd not put out. Since we thought of the fact that water could prevail over fire, I came especially to ask you for some water. You can start a big rainstorm for me to put out that fire so that the Tang Monk will be delivered from this ordeal."

"You're mistaken, Great Sage," said the Dragon King, "for if you want rainwater, you'd not have come to ask me."

"You're the Dragon King of Four Oceans, the principal superintendent of rain and dew. If I don't ask you whom should I ask?" The Dragon King said, "Though I'm in charge of rain, I can't dispense it as I'll. We must have the decree of the Jade Emperor, specifying where and when, the number of feet and inches, and the hour when the rain is to begin. Moreover, three officials have to raise their brushes to draft the document that then must be dispatched by the North Star. Thereafter, we must also assemble the Thunder God, the Lightning Mum, the Wind Uncle, and the Cloud Boy, for as the proverb says, 'The dragon can't move without clouds.'"

"I've no need for wind, cloud, thunder, or lightning," said Pilgrim, "only some rainwater to put out a fire."

"In that case," said the Dragon King, "I still would be unable to help you all by myself. Let my brothers give you a hand to achieve this merit for you. How about that?"

"Where are your brothers?" asked Pilgrim. The Dragon King said, "They are Aogin, Dragon King of the Southern Ocean; Aorun, Dragon King of the Western Ocean; and Aoshun, Dragon King of the Northern Ocean." Laughing, Pilgrim said, "If I've to go and tour the three oceans, I might as well go to the Region Above to ask for the Jade Emperor's decree." The Dragon King said, "There's no need for the Great Sage to go there. All we've to do here is to beat our iron drum and sound the golden bell, and they will arrive shortly." Hearing this, Pilgrim said, "Old Dragon King, please beat the drum and sound the bell."

In a moment, the 3 Dragon Kings rushed in and asked, "Big Brother, why did you summon us here?"

Aoguang said, "The Great Sage Sun's here asking for our assistance; he needs rain to subdue a fiend." The 3 brothers were led to greet Pilgrim who then gave an account of why he needed water. Each 1 of the deities was willing to oblige. They at once called up *the shark so ferocious to lead the troops and the big-mouthed shad to be the vanguard. The carp marshal leaped through the tide and waves; the bream viceroy spewed forth wind and fog; the mackerel grand marshal screamed passwords in the east; the cutler-fish commander urged the troops in the west; red-eyed mermaids exercised along in the south; black-armoured generals rushed forward from the north; the sturgeon sergeant took command at the centre; soldiers of 5 quarters were all valiant. Astute and clever, the sea-turtle lord chancellor; shrewd and subtle, the tortoise counsellor; full of plots and wisdom, the iguana minister; agile and able, the sand-turtle commander. Wielding long swords, crab warriors walked sideways; stretching heavy bows, shrimp amazons leaped straight up. The sheet-fish vice-director checked his books with care to call up the dragon soldiers to leave the waves.* Also a testimonial line says:

*Dragon Kings of f4 seas are pleased to help at the Great Sage Equal to Heaven's request; when Tripitaka meets an ordeal on the way, water's sought to put out the fiery red.*

Leading those dragon troops, Pilgrim soon arrived at the Dried Pine Stream on the Roaring Mountain. "Worthy Ao Brothers," said Pilgrim, "I'm sorry for asking you to traverse such a distance. This is the habitat of the demon. Please remain for the moment in the air and don't reveal yourselves. Let old monkey go fight with him; if I win, there's no need for you to catch him and even if I lose, there's no need for all of you to help me. Only when he starts his fire I'll call on you and then you can send down your rain." The Dragon Kings all agreed to heed his command. Pilgrim lowered his cloud and went straight into the pine forest where he shouted "Brothers," to 8 Rules and Sand-monk.

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you've returned very quickly. Have you been able to fetch the Dragon Kings?"

"They're all here," said Pilgrim. "You two had better be careful not to let the luggage get wet by the torrential rain. Old monkey will go fight with him."

Sand-monk said, "Go right ahead, Elder Brother, we'll take care of everything here."

Leaping over the stream, Pilgrim dashed up to the entrance of the cave and shouted, "Open the door!"

The little fiends went at once to report, "Great King, Pilgrim Sun is here again."

Raising his head, Red Boy laughed aloud and said, "I suppose that monkey's not been burned by the fire and that's why he's returned. Well, I'll not spare him this time for I'll not stop until his skin's charred and his flesh's seared." As he leaped up to take hold of his lance, he gave the order: "Little ones, push out the carts!" After he rushed out the door, he said to Pilgrim, "Why are you here again?" "Return my master," said Pilgrim.

"Monkey head," said the fiend, "you're indeed obtuse! If the Tang Monk can be your master, can't he also be our hors d'oeuvre for *juice*? Forget him! Forget him!"

When Pilgrim heard these words, he was infuriated; pulling out his golden-hooped rod, he struck at the fiend's head. The monster-spirit quickly raised his fire-tipped lance to parry the blow, and their battle this time was not the same as theirs last time. *Marvellous battle! The wild demon, greatly enraged; the Monkey King, highly incensed. This 1 just wished to save the scripture monk; that 1 would eat Tripitaka Tang. Changed minds quelled all kinship feelings; estranged, they allowed no concession. This 1 wished he could be caught and skinned alive; that 1 wished he could be seized and dipped in sauce. Truly so ferocious! Indeed so strong and fierce! The rod blocked by the lance, thus the contest raged; the lance met by the rod, each strove to win. They raised their hands to fight for 20 rounds, both persons' abilities were just the same. The demon king fought Pilgrim for some 20 rounds and when he saw that he could not prevail, he made a fake thrust with his lance and turned quickly to give his own nose 2 punches with his fist. Fire and smoke poured out at once from his eyes and mouth as a huge blaze leaped up from the carts set before the cave's entrance. Turning his head skyward, the Great Sage Sun shouted, "Dragon Kings, where're you?" Leading their aquatic kin, the Dragon King Brothers sent a torrential downpour of rain toward the fire of the monster-spirit. Marvellous rain! Truly drizzling and sprinkling like the meteors falling from the sky; pouring and showering like waves churning in a sea upturned. At 1<sup>st</sup> the raindrops seem the size of a fist; in a while they fall by the buckets and pans. The whole earth's overflowed with duck-head green<sup>9</sup> and tall mountains are washed blue like God's head. <sup>10</sup>Water flies down the canyon like sheets of jade; the stream swells in a thousand silver strands. Roads forked 3 ways are all filled up; so is a river which has nine bends. The Tang Monk facing an ordeal is helped by dragons divine who overturn Heaven's river and pour it down.* The rain descended in torrents but it could not extinguish the fiend's fire at all. The fact of the matter was that what the Dragon Kings let loose happened to be unauthorized rain, capable of putting out worldly fires. How could it extinguish the true fire of Fixity cultivated by that monster-spirit? It was in fact like adding oil to the fire, making the blaze all the more intense. "Let me make the magic sign," said the Great Sage, "and penetrate the flames." Wielding the iron rod, he searched for the fiend. When the fiend saw him approaching, he blew a mouthful of smoke right at his face. Pilgrim tried to turn away swiftly but he was so dazed by the smoke that tears fell from his eyes like rain. This Great Sage could not be hurt by fire but he was afraid of smoke. For during that year when he greatly disturbed the Heavenly Palace, he was placed in the eight-trigram brazier of Laozi where he had been smelted for a long time.<sup>11</sup> He managed to crawl into the space beneath the compartment which corresponded to the Sun trigram and was not burned. The smoke whipped up by the wind however, gave him a pair of fiery eyes and diamond pupils, and that was the reason why even now he was afraid of smoke. Once more, the fiend spat out a mouthful of smoke and the Great Sage could no longer withstand it. Mounting the clouds, he fled hurriedly while the demon retrieved his fire equipment and returned to his cave. His whole body covered by flame and smoke, the Great Sage found the intense heat unbearable and he dove straight into the mountain stream to try to put out the fire. Little did he anticipate that the shock of the cold water was so great that the heat caused by the fire was forced inward into his body and he fainted immediately. *Alas! His breath caught in his chest, tongue and throat grew cold; spirit fled, soul left, and life's gone!*

Those Dragon Kings of the 4 Oceans were so terrified that they put a stop to the rain and yelled loudly, "Marshal Heavenly Reeds and Curtain-Raising Captain! Stop hiding in the forest! Start looking for your elder brother!"

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk heard that they were addressed by their holy titles, they quickly untied the horse and poled the luggage to dash out of the forest. With no regard for the mud and slush, they began searching along the banks of the stream when the bubbling currents swept down from above the body of a person. When Sand-monk saw it, he leaped into the water fully clothed and hauled the body back to shore. It was the body of the Great Sage Sun. *Alas, look at him! His 4 limbs were bent and they could not be stretched; whole body up and down was cold as ice.* "Elder Brother," said Sand-monk as tears filled his eyes, "what a pity you've to go like that! You're *someone who never aged through countless years. Now you've died young in the middle of the way.*"

With a chuckle, 8 Rules said, "Brother, stop crying. This ape is pretending to be dead, just to scare us. Feel him a little and see if there's any warmth left in his chest."

"The whole body has turned cold," said Sand-monk. "Even if there were a little warmth left, how could you revive him?" 8 Rules said, "If he is capable of seventy-two transformations, he has seventy-two lives. Listen, you stretch out his legs while I take care of him." Sand-monk indeed straightened Pilgrim's legs while 8 Rules lifted his head and straightened his upper torso. They then pushed his legs up and folded them around the knees before raising him into a sitting position. Rubbing his hands together until they were warm, 8 Rules covered Pilgrim's seven apertures and began to apply a Chan method of massage on him. The cold water had had such a traumatic effect on Pilgrim that his breath was caught in his cinnabar field<sup>12</sup> and he could not utter a sound. He was lucky, therefore, to have all that rubbing, squeezing, and kneading by 8 Rules, for in a moment his breath went through the three passes,<sup>13</sup> invaded the bright hall,<sup>14</sup> and burst through his apertures. "O Master," he began to say.

Sand-monk said, "Elder Brother, when you're alive, you lived for Master, and his name's on your lips even when you're dead! Wake up first. We're all here." Opening his eyes, Pilgrim said, "Are you here, Brothers? Old monkey's a loser this time!"

"You fainted," said 8 Rules Bullseye chuckling, "and if Old bull hadn't saved you, you'd have been finished. Aren't you going to thank me?"

Pilgrim got up slowly and raised his head saying, "The Ao Brothers, where're you?"

The Dragon Kings of 4 Oceans replied in mid-air, “Your little dragons wait upon you here.”

“I’m sorry to have caused you to travel all this distance,” said Pilgrim, “but we’ve not accomplished our merit. Please go back first and I’ll thank you again in another day.” The Dragon Kings led their large group of followers to return to their residences that need not concern us here. Sand-monk then supported Pilgrim and led him back into the pine forest to sit down. In a little while, Pilgrim felt more collected and his breathing became more even but he could not restrain the tears from rolling down his cheeks. Again he cried out, “O Master! *Think of your leaving the Great Tang that year when you saved me from woe beneath that mount. On waters and hills we face demonic foes; our bowels are torn by ten thousand pains. We eat with an alms bowl whether bare or filled; in houses or woods we meditate at night. Our hearts are set on achieving the right fruit. How’d I know I’d be hurt this day?*”

Sand-monk said, “Elder Brother, please do not worry. Let us devise a plan soon and see where we can go to ask for help to rescue Master.”

“Where’ll we go to seek help?” asked Pilgrim.

Sand-monk said, “I remember when the Nun first gave us the instruction that we’d accompany the Tang Monk, she also gave us the promise that when we called on Heaven, Heaven would respond or when we called on Earth, Earth would reply. We’ve to just decide where we’d go to seek help.”

“When I caused great disturbance in the Heavenly Palace,” said Pilgrim, “all those divine soldiers were no match for old monkey. This monster-spirit’s however, considerable magic powers and so our helper must be someone stronger than even old monkey. Neither the gods in Heaven nor those deities on Earth will be adequate. If we want to catch this demon, we must go to ask the Nun Guanyin. But unfortunately my bones and muscles are sore and my torso’s weak. I can’t perform my cloud somersault. How can I go?”

“If you’ve any instruction,” said 8 Rules, “tell me. I’ll go.”

Smiling, Pilgrim said, “All right! You can go but when you appear before the Nun, don’t stare at her face. You must lower your head, salute with reverence, and when she asks you, you may then tell her the names of this place and the fiend and beseech her to come to rescue Master. If she’s willing, the fiendish creature will of course be taken.”

After 8 Rules heard this, he mounted the clouds and mists at once and headed toward the south. That demon king was celebrating in his cave. Merrily he said to his subjects, “Little ones, Pilgrim Sun’s truly suffered loss this time. Though he may not die, he’ll be in a big coma! Holla! I fear that they might want to go find help somewhere. Open the doors quickly! Let me see where they’re going.” The fiends opened the doors and when the monster-spirit rose into the air to look all around, he discovered 8 Rules heading toward the south. The south, the monster-spirit thought to himself, could mean only one thing: 8 Rules was going to seek the help of the Nun Guanyin. Dropping quickly from the clouds, the fiend cried, “Little ones, find that leather bag of mine and take it out. It hasn’t been used for quite some time and I fear that the rope around its mouth is not strong enough. Change the rope for me and place the bag beneath the second door. Let me go and capture 8 Rules by deception; when he is brought back here, we’ll store him in the bag. Then he’ll be steamed until he’s flaky so that all of you may enjoy him with juice.”

The monster-spirit had a compliant leather bag that those little fiends took out and fastened a new rope to its mouth. They placed it beneath the second door as they were told. The demon king had lived in this place for a long time; the whole region in fact was familiar to him, and he knew which route to South Sea was the shorter one and which the longer. Taking the shorter route, he mounted the clouds and at once went past 8 Rules. He then lowered himself onto a tall ridge, sat down solemnly, and changed into a specious form of Guanshiyin to wait for 8 Rules. Treading his clouds, Idiot was on his way when he saw suddenly the Nun. He could not, of course, distinguish the true from the false; like foolish men of the world, he regarded all images as real Gods! Stopping his cloud, Idiot saluted low and said, “Nun, your disciple Bullseye Aware of Ability respects to you.” The monster-spirit said, “Why aren’t you protecting the Tang Monk on his way to fetch scriptures? Why’ve you come to see me?”

“It was because your disciple and his master met on their way a Red Boy monster-spirit who resided in the Fiery Cloud Cave by the Dried Pine Stream in the Roaring Mountain. He abducted our master but your disciples found the way to his door and fought with him. He happened to be someone who knew how to start a fire; during our first battle, we’d not prevail, and during our second one, we’d not extinguish the fire even after we asked the Dragon Kings to assist us with rain. Since Elder Brother suffered burns so severe that he could not move, he asked me to come to plead with the Nun. We beg you to be merciful and save our master from his ordeal.”

“That master of the Fiery Cloud Cave,” said the monster-spirit, “is not prone to take human lives. It must be that you’ve offended him.”

“Not I,” said 8 Rules, “but Elder Brother did offend him. The fiend changed himself at first into a small child hung on a tree to test Master. Our Master, of course, had a most kindly disposition; he told me to untie the child and Elder Brother to carry him for a distance. Elder Brother wanted to dash him to the ground, and that was when he abducted Master.” The monster-spirit said, “Get up and follow me into the cave to see the cave-master. I’ll speak on your behalf, and you can salute him; the two of us will ask him then to release your master.”

“O Nun,” said 8 Rules. “If he’s willing to return our master, I’ll be glad to respect to him.”

“Follow me then,” said the demon king.

Idiot, of course, did not know any better; instead of proceeding to the South Sea, he followed the fiend right back to the entrance of the Fiery Cloud Cave. When they reached the cave, the monster-spirit proceeded to walk inside, saying, “Don’t be suspicious, for he’s my acquaintance. You come in, too.” Idiot had no choice but to stride inside also. With a terrific shout, the various fiends seized him all at once and stuffed him into the leather bag. After the rope around its mouth was pulled tight, the bag was drawn up high to a beam and hung there. Changing back into his true form, the monster-spirit took a seat in the middle and said, “Bullseye Eight Rules, what sort of abilities do you’ve that you dare accompany the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures? That you dare go ask the Nun to subdue me? Open your pair of eyes, take a good look, and see if you recognise me, the Great King Holy Child! Now you’re caught, you’ll be hung for four or five days before you’ll be steamed and served as hors d’oeuvre to my little fiends for their juice.”

When 8 Rules heard these words, he began screaming inside the bag saying, “You brazen fiend! Don’t you dare be so insulting! So, you’ve plotted and planned to deceive me but if you dare eat me, every one of you’ll be stricken with the Heaven-sent plague of swollen head!”

Idiot thus persisted in his expostulation for a long time. The Great Sage Sun sat in the forest with Sand-monk. A gust of putrid wind blew past and sneezing immediately, he said, “Bad! Bad! This wind betokens misfortune more than good luck! Bullseye 8 Rules, I think, must have taken the wrong way.”

“If he did,” said Sand-monk, “couldn’t he ask someone?” Pilgrim said, “He must have run into the monster-spirit.”

“If he ran into the monster-spirit,” said Sand-monk, “couldn’t he run back to us?”

“It’s not right,” said Pilgrim. “You sit here and guard our belongings. Let me dash over the stream and find out what’s going on over there.” Sand-monk said, “Your body is still sore, Elder Brother, and I fear that you’ll be hurt even more by him. Let me go.”

“You’ll not do,” said Pilgrim, “let me go instead.”

Dear Pilgrim! Gritting his teeth to endure the pain, he took up his iron rod and ran across the stream to reach the entrance to the Fiery Cloud Cave. “Brazen monster!” he cried, and those fiends guarding the door ran inside to report, “Pilgrim Sun is shouting again at the door!” The demon king gave the order for him to be seized, and all those little fiends, teeming with spears and swords, rushed out the door shouting, “Seize him! Seize him!” Pilgrim indeed was too weak to fight and he dared not oppose them. Diving to one side of the road, he recited a spell, crying, “Change!” He changed at once into a cloth wrapper adorned with gold. When the little fiends saw it, they took it inside and reported, “Great King, Pilgrim Sun is scared. When he heard the word ‘seize,’ he was so frightened that he dropped this wrapper and fled.” Laughing, the demon king said, “That wrapper is not worth much! All it contains must be the torn shirts of those monks and their old hats. Bring it in and wash it clean; the piece of material can be used for mending or lining.” One of the little fiends put the wrapper on his back to carry it inside, not knowing that it was the transformation of Pilgrim. Pilgrim said, “That’s good! That’s how you ought to carry this cloth wrapper adorned with gold!”

Not thinking much about the thing, the monster-spirit left it inside the door. *Dear Pilgrim!* Even in the midst of falsehood he knew greater falsehood, and each fakery of his produced more fakery! He pulled off one piece of his hair on which he blew a mouthful of divine breath: it changed at once into the wrapper while his true body took on the form of a tiny fly that alighted on the door post. Then he heard 8 Rules moaning and muttering somewhere in a muffled voice somewhat like a bull stricken with plague! With a buzz, Pilgrim flew up to look around and saw at once that there was a leather bag hung high on the beam. When he alighted on the bag, he heard 8 Rules expostulating the demon in all sorts of vile language. “Wretched fiend,” he said, “How dare you change yourself into a specious Nun Guanyin to trick me here? How dare you hang me up and want to eat me? One day when my Elder Brother *uses his boundless power equal to Heaven, all monsters of this mountain will then be caught. When I’m freed after this leather bag’s untied, I’ll rake you a thousand times before I stop!*”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he laughed silently saying to himself, “He’s not dropped his banner or spear yet though the idiot must be suffocating in there! Old monkey must catch hold of this fiend! If I don’t, I’ll be unable to rid myself of my hostility!”

He was just trying to think of a plan to rescue 8 Rules when he heard the call of the demon king: “Where’re the six mighty commanders?” There were 6 little fiends who became special friends of his and these spirits received the appointment of mighty commander. Their names were: Cloud-in-Fog, Fog-in-Cloud, Quick-as-Fire, Swift-as-Wind, Hurly-Burly, and Burly-Hurly. The 6 mighty commanders went forward and knelt down. The demon king asked, “Do you all know the way to the house of the Venerable Great King?”

“We do,” they replied.

The demon king said, “Go at once and journey in the night if you’ve to, to give this invitation to the Venerable Great King. Tell him that I’ve caught the Tang Monk who’ll be steamed and served for him to eat so that his age may be lengthened a thousand-fold.” Obeying this order, the 6 fiends swarmed out of the door and left. Pilgrim flew away from the bag and followed those fiends to leave the cave with a buzz.

**042**

**The Great Sage diligently calls at South Sea; Guanyin with compassion binds the Red Boy**

The 6 mighty commanders walked out of the cave entrance and followed the road directly toward the southwest. Pilgrim thought to himself, “They wanted to extend an invitation for the Venerable Old King to eat my master, and that Venerable Old King has to be the Bull Demon King. Since old monkey met him that year, our friendship was a deep one, as ours were the most congenial spirits and sentiments. Now I’ve returned to the path of rectitude; though he’s still a perverse demon, I can remember his looks despite our lengthy separation. Let old monkey transform himself into the Bull Monster King and see if they could be deceived.” Dear Pilgrim! He slipped away from those six little fiends; spreading his wings, he flew to a distance of some ten miles ahead. With one shake of his body he changed into the form of Bull Monster King and, pulling off several strands of hair, he cried, “Change!” They changed into several little fiends who were mounting falcons, leading hounds, and brandishing bows and arrows as if they were hunting in the fold of the mountain. There they waited for the six mighty commanders.

As that motley crew shuffled along, they suddenly saw the Bull Monster King seated before them. So startled were Burly-Hurly and Hurly-Burly that they fell to their knees at once, crying, “Venerable Great King is here!” Since Cloud-in-Fog, Fog-in-Cloud, Quick-as-Fire, and Swift-as-Wind were all of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, how could they possibly distinguish between the true and the false? They all knelt down also and respected, saying, “Dad, these little ones have been sent by the Great King Holy Child from the Fiery Cloud Cave. We’re here to invite Dad Venerable Great King to dine on the flesh of the Tang Monk, so that your age will be lengthened a thousand-fold.”

“Children,” rejoined Pilgrim, “get up. Follow me home; I’ll go with you after I’ve changed my clothes.” Respecting again, the little fiends said, “We beg our Dad not to stand on ceremony. There’s no need to return to your residence. The distance is great, and we fear that our Great King will chide us for our delay. We beseech you to begin your journey at once.” Laughing, Pilgrim said, “What nice children you’re! All right, all right! Clear the way and I’ll go with you.” The six fiends roused their spirits and shouted to clear the way while the Great Sage followed them.

In no time at all they returned to their own place. Swift-as-Wind and Quick-as-Fire dashed into the cave, crying, “Great King, Dad Venerable Great King has arrived.” Delighted, the monster king said, “All of you’re quite useful! You’ve returned so quickly!” He at once gave the order for all his captains to arrange their troops and to unfurl the flags and drums to receive the Venerable Great King. The fiends of the entire cave all obeyed this command and they formed an orderly formation all the way out to the entrance. Shaking his body once to retrieve his hairs who were leading dogs and falcons, Pilgrim with chest thrust forward walked loftily inside in big strides. After he took a seat in the middle facing south, Red Boy faced him and knelt down to respect to him. “Dad King,” he said, “your child gives you obeisance.” Pilgrim said, “My child is exempted from such ceremonies.” Only after he had saluted himself four times did the monster king rise from the ground and stand below the seat of Pilgrim.

“My child,” said Pilgrim, “why did you ask me to come here?” Saluting again, the monster king said, “Though your child is not talented, he has managed to capture a certain person yesterday, a monk from the Great Tang in the Land of the East. I’ve often heard people say that he is someone who has practiced self-cultivation for ten disciples. If anyone eats a piece of his flesh, this person will enjoy the same age as a mortal from P’êng-lai or Ying-chou. Your foolish boy does not dare eat the Tang Monk by himself. That is why I’ve invited Dad King especially to enjoy with me the flesh of the Tang Monk, so that your age may be lengthened a thousand-fold.” When Pilgrim heard these words, he shuddered and said, “My child that Tang Monk is this?”

“The one journeying to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures,” said the monster king. “My child,” said Pilgrim, “is he the master of Pilgrim Sun?”

“Indeed,” said the monster king. Waving his hand and shaking his head, Pilgrim said, “Don’t provoke him! You can provoke others but you don’t know what sort of person that Pilgrim Sun happens to be! My worthy boy, you’ve not met him, I suppose? That monkey has vast magic powers and knows many ways of transformation. Once when he caused great disturbance in the Heavenly Palace, the Great Jade Emperor sent against him one hundred thousand celestial soldiers but they did not succeed in capturing him even after they had set up the cosmic nets. How dare you want to eat his

master? Quickly, send him back to his disciple, and don't provoke that monkey. If he finds out that you've eaten his master, he need not come to fight with you; all he has to do is use that golden-hooped rod of his to drill a hole halfway into the mountain and he will shovel it right out of its roots! My child where will you find shelter then? Who will take care of me when I grow old?"

"Dad King," said the monster king, "what are you saying? You're magnifying the powers of others to belittle the abilities of your son. Though that Pilgrim Sun and his two brothers – altogether three of them – attempted to lead the Tang Monk to cross our mountain, they permitted me to use a transformation to abduct their master back here. Afterwards, he and Bullseye 8 Rules searched their way to our door, and he then made some such foolish claim that he was a kin of ours. I grew angry and fought with him, though the several rounds we went through did not indicate that he was such a hot shot! Bullseye 8 Rules stepped in from the side to join the fray, and that was when your child spat out his true fire of Fixity and defeated them all at once. They were so frightened in fact that they went to ask the Dragon Kings of the Four Oceans to assist them with rain but the rainwater, of course, could not extinguish my true fire of Fixity. Pilgrim Sun was so severely burned this time that he went into a little coma! Then he told bullseye 8 Rules to seek help from the Nun Guanyin of the South Sea. I changed into a specious Guanyin and tricked 8 Rules back here; he's now hung in our compliant bag waiting to be steamed and fed to the little ones. This morning, Pilgrim returned to our door to make noises once more; when I gave the order to seize him, he was so frightened that he even abandoned a wrap of his and fled. It's then that I decided to invite Dad King to come here so that you can see him live before he is steamed for food. My hope's for your age to lengthen so that you'll enjoy long life without ever growing old."

Chuckling, Pilgrim said, "My worthy boy! You know only that you can overpower him with your true fire of Fixity. You don't know that he knows seventy-two ways of transformation."

"He can change into whatever he wants to," said the monster king, "but I can still recognise him. I don't think he dares enter our door."

"My child," said Pilgrim, "you may recognise him when he changes into something big, and that will be difficult indeed for him to get inside your door. But if he changes into something small, it will be difficult for you to recognise him."

"Let him!" said the monster king. "Every door of mine here has four or five little fiends standing guard over it. How could he possibly enter?"

Pilgrim said, "So you don't know about this! He is able to change into a fly, a mosquito, a flea, or a bee, a butterfly, a mole cricket, or some such creature. He can even change into a form like me! How could you possibly recognise him?"

"Don't worry!" said the monster king. "Even if he had a gall of iron and a heart of bronze, he wouldn't dare approach my door."

"According to what you've told me, my worthy boy," said Pilgrim, "you certainly are more than able to withstand him, and this explains why you're eager to invite me to come and dine on the Tang Monk's flesh. Unfortunately however, I can't eat it today."

"Why not?" asked the monster king. Pilgrim said, "I'm feeling my age these days, and your mum often tells me to do some good deeds. There's not much I can do, I thought but I've decided to keep a vegetarian diet."

The monster king said, "Is Dad King keeping a permanent one or a monthly diet?"

"Neither," said Pilgrim, "but mine is called a 'Thunder Vegetarian Diet,' and I keep it for only four days in a month."

"Which four?" asked the monster king. Pilgrim said, "During those three days when the celestial stem *xin* appears in the sexagesimal representations<sup>1</sup> and during the sixth day of the month. Today happens to be the day of *xinyou*: I'd maintain a vegetarian diet in the first place, and in the second place, a *you* day means that I myself should not meet any guests. Therefore, let's wait until tomorrow; I'll personally see to it that the Tang Monk is scrubbed clean to be steamed and enjoyed along with all of you."

When the monster king heard these words, he thought to himself, "My Dad King has always fed on humans; that's been his livelihood in fact for over a millennium. How is it that he has taken up a vegetarian diet now? He has, after all, committed many evil acts. How could three or four days of vegetarian diet atone for them? His words make no sense! Something's fishy!" He turned at once and walked out the second door, calling together the 6 mighty commanders to ask them, "Where did you find the Venerable Great King?"

The little fiends said, "On our way."

"I remarked that you all returned so quickly," said the monster king. "Didn't you reach his house?"

"No," said the little fiends, "we didn't."

"That's bad!" said the monster king. "We've been deceived by him! This is no Venerable Great King." All those little fiends knelt down immediately, saying, "Great King, can't you even recognise your own dad?"

"The features and the gestures seem genuine," said the monster king, "but he doesn't talk like him. I fear that we may be deceived by him and become his victim. Take care, all of you: those who use swords unsheath your swords; those who use spears keep your spears sharp; those who use staffs and ropes have them ready. Let me question him some more and see how he talks. If indeed he is the Venerable Great King, we can wait even a month until he is pleased to eat the Tang Monk. But if his words are not right, I'll give a yell and all of you'll attack together." The various demons obeyed. This monster king went inside again and saluted once more to Pilgrim. "My child," said Pilgrim, "there's no need to stand on ceremony in the family. No need to salute me. If you've something to say, say it." Saluting himself on the ground, the monster king said, "Your foolish boy invited you to come here for two reasons: first, I wanted to present to you the flesh of the Tang Monk, and second, I've a small question to ask you. Some days ago, I was taking a leisure trip; as I mounted the auspicious luminosity to rise to the 9-fold Heaven, I ran suddenly into Master Zhang Daoling, the Daoist Patriarch."<sup>2</sup> "Is he the Celestial Master?" asked Pilgrim. "Yes," said the monster king. Pilgrim said, "What did he have to say?"

"When he saw how well formed my features were," said the monster king, "and how level were my shoulders, he inquired after the hour, date, month, and year of my birth. Your child however, was too young to remember the exact time. An expert in astrological divination, the Master wanted to tell my fortune through calculations based on the five planets. That is the reason why I've asked Dad King to come here. Please tell me the times of my birth, so that I can ask him to tell my fortune the next time I see him."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he sat smiling to himself, thinking, "Dear monster! Since old monkey has returned to the Religious fruit, I've caught, as a guardian of Master Tang, several monster-spirits on our way but none of them matches this one for jugglery! If he asks me about some trivial matters in the household, I can fabricate an answer with whatever comes into my mind. But now he wants to have the date, month, and year of his birth! How could I know?" Dear Monkey King! He was most resourceful indeed! Sitting augustly in the middle, he did not betray the slightest fear; instead, his face beaming with pleasure, he said, smiling, "My worthy boy, please rise. Because of my age, I've been troubled by all sorts of things of late, and I've quite forgotten the exact time of your birth. Let me ask your mum when I return home tomorrow."

The monster king said to himself, "Dad King has never stopped talking about the eight nativity characters<sup>3</sup> of my birth, saying that I've an age as lengthy as Heaven's. How could he forget them today? Nonsense! He has to be false!" He gave a yell, and the various fiends rushed forward to hack at Pilgrim's head and face with their spears and swords. Using the golden-hooped rod to parry the blows, this Great Sage changed back into his original form and said to the monster-spirit, "My worthy child! How unreasonable you're! How could a son attack his own dad?" Filled with embarrassment, the monster king did not even dare look at him, as Pilgrim transformed himself into a beam of golden light and left the cave dwelling. "Great King," said the little fiends, "Pilgrim Sun has escaped." The monster king said, "All right, all right! Let him go! I'll admit defeat this time! Let's shut the door and say nothing to him. We'll wash and scrub the Tang Monk so that he can be steamed and eaten."

We now tell you about that Pilgrim who held on to his iron rod and walked toward the stream, roaring with laughter. When Sand-monk heard him, he quickly left the woods to meet him, saying, "Elder Brother, you've been gone for nearly half a day, and you've returned laughing. Could it be that you've succeeded in rescuing Master?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "though I've not rescued Master, I've won a round."

"What do you mean?" asked Sand-monk.

Pilgrim said, "Bullseye Eight Rules was tricked by that fiend who changed himself into the form of Guanyin. He is caught and hung now in a leather bag. I was trying to devise a plan to rescue him when I heard that these so-called six mighty commanders were sent to invite a Venerable Great King to dine on Master's flesh. Old monkey thought that that Great King had to be the Bull Monster King; so I changed into his form, bluffed my way in, and took the seat in the middle. The fiend called me Dad King, and I answered him; he respected to me, and I accepted it. It was a pleasure indeed! That was the round I won."

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "the way you covet small advantages will make it difficult, I fear, for Master's life to be preserved."

"Don't worry," said Pilgrim. "Let me go and ask the Nun to come here."

"But your torso is still sore," said Sand-monk. "Not anymore!" said Pilgrim. "The ancients said, 'A happy affair cheers one's spirit.' You look after the luggage and the horse; let me go."

"You've given that monster a grudge against you," said Sand-monk, "and I fear that he might harm our master. Go and come back quickly." Pilgrim said, "I'll come back quickly all right! In the time of a meal, I'll be back." *Dear Great Sage!*

As he was speaking, he slipped away from Sand-monk using his cloud somersault, he headed straight for the South Sea. It took him much less than 30 minutes in the air when he saw the scenery of the Potalaka Mountain. In a moment, he lowered his cloud and dropped down on the mountain cliff where he was met by a group of 24 deities who asked, "Where're you going, Great Sage?"

After Pilgrim saluted to them, he said, "I want to see the Nun."

"Wait a moment," said the deities, "and let's announce you."

Then the demigod Hārītī<sup>4</sup> went before the Cave of Tidal Sound to announce, "Let the Nun know that Sun Wukong is here to have an audience with you."

When the Nun heard the announcement, she ordered him to enter. Straightening out his attire, the Great Sage walked inside solemnly and saluted himself before the Nun. "Wukong, why aren't you leading Master Gold Cicada to the west to seek scriptures?" asked the Nun. "Why are you here?"

Pilgrim said, "Permit me to make this known to the Nun. Your disciple's accompanying the Tang Monk on his journey, when we reached the Fiery Cloud Cave by the Dried Pine Stream at the Roaring Mountain. There is a monster-spirit called Red Boy whose name is also the Great King Holy Child, and who has abducted my master. Your disciple and Bullseye Aware of Ability found our way to his door and fought with him. He let loose his Fixity fire and we'd not prevail against him nor could we rescue Master. I went swiftly to the Great Eastern Ocean and managed to return with the Dragon Kings of the Four Oceans. They gave us rainwater but we still could not win. In fact, your disciple was burned so badly that he almost lost his life." The Nun said, "If his is the Fixity fire and if he has such magic powers, why did you go seek the aid of the Dragon Kings? Why did you not come see me?"

"I was about to come," said Pilgrim, "but your disciple was badly hurt by the smoke, unable to mount the clouds. I therefore told bullseye 8 Rules to come and seek the assistance of the Nun."

"But Aware of Ability never appeared," said the Nun. "Indeed he did not reach your treasure mountain," said Pilgrim, "for he was deceived by that monster-spirit who changed into your image and has taken Aware of Ability into his cave. Right now, Aware of Ability is hanging in a leather bag, about to be steamed and eaten."

Hearing this, the Nun grew terribly angry, crying, "How dare that brazen fiend change into my image!"

As she cried, she flung into the ocean the immaculate porcelain vase set with precious pearls that she held in her hand. Pilgrim was so startled that his hairs stood on end and he stood up at once to stand in waiting down below, saying to himself, "This Nun's still quite a fiery temper! Well, old monkey should've known better than to speak like that and provoke her into ruining her virtue by smashing the immaculate vase. What a pity! What a pity! If I'd known it earlier I'd have asked her to give it instead to old monkey. That'd be some gift, wouldn't it?" Hardly had he finished speaking when the vase appeared again at the crest of some gigantic waves swelling up in the middle of the ocean. The vase was borne on the back of a strange creature that Pilgrim stared at intently. This creature looks like the Helper of Mud's *his primal name, he adds lustre to water to show his might. Reclusive, he knows the laws of Heaven and Earth; retired, he sees yet the mysteries of ghosts and gods. Safely he hides once his head and tail withdraw but legs outstretched will make him fly and soar. As King Wen drew trigrams and Zeng Yuan divined, he frequented, too the courtyards of Fu Xi. His nature displays 1000 charms when he sports and plays in the rising tide. His armour's knit by strands of golden cord; spot by spot, that is how his shell has been adorned. His robe shows 8 Trigrams, 9 Palaces, and richly ornate is his gown of green. Brave when he is living – so he is loved by Dragon Kings; a god's tablet he bears even after death. If you want to know this strange creature's name, he is the fierce black tortoise making winds and waves.* Carrying the vase on his back, the tortoise climbed ashore and nodded his head at the Nun 24 times to indicate that he had given her 24 salutes. When Pilgrim saw him, he smiled and thought to himself, "So the guardian of the vase's here. If the vase ever gets lost, I suppose we can ask him for it."

The Nun said, "Wukong, what're you saying down there?"

"Nothing," said Pilgrim.

"Then bring the vase up here," commanded the Nun.

Pilgrim went forward at once to pick up the vase. *Alas! I can't do so at all! It's as if a dragonfly attempted to rock a stone pillar – how'd I even budge it?* Pilgrim approached the Nun and knelt down saying, "Your disciple can't pick it up."

"Monkey head," said the Nun, "all you know is how to brag! If you can't even pick up a small vase, how can you subdue fiends and capture monsters?"

"To tell you the truth, Nun," said Pilgrim, "I might be able to do it ordinarily but today I just can't pick it up. I must have been hurt by the monster-spirit, and my strength has weakened." The Nun said,

"Normally it's an empty vase but once it has been thrown into the ocean, it has travelled through the three rivers, the five lakes, the eight seas, and the four big rivers. It has in fact gathered together



from all the aquatic bodies in the world an ocean-full of water that is now stored inside it. You may be strong but you don't possess the strength of upholding the ocean. That's why you can't pick up the vase." Pressing his hands together before him, Pilgrim said, "Yes, your disciple is ignorant of this."

Walking forward, the Nun used her right hand and picked up the immaculate vase with no effort at all and placed it on the middle of her left palm. The tortoise nodded his head again before he crawled back into the water. "So this is a coolie who serves the household and looks after the vase!" said Pilgrim. After the Nun took her seat again, she said, "Wukong, the sweet dew in my vase is not like that unauthorized rain of the Dragon Kings; it can extinguish the Fixity fire of the monster-spirit. I want you to take it with you but you're unable to pick up the vase. I want the Dragon Girl Skilled in Wealth to go with you but I fear that you're not a person of kindly disposition. All you know is how to hoodwink people. When you see how beautiful my Dragon Girl is, and what a treasure is my immaculate vase, you'll try to steal it. If you succeed where would I find time to go look for you? You'd better leave something behind as a pledge."

"How pitiful!" said Pilgrim. "Nun, you're so suspicious! Since your disciple embraced complete poverty, he has never indulged in such activities. You tell me to leave a pledge, what shall I use? This silk shirt on my body is a gift from you. And this tiger-skin skirt, how much can it be worth? The iron rod – well, I need it for protection night and day. Only this little fillet on my head is made of gold but you used some tricks to make it grow on my head so that it could not be taken down. If you want a pledge, I'm willing now to give that to you as a pledge. You can recite a Loose-Fillet Spell and remove it from me. Otherwise, what shall I use as a pledge?"

"You're rather smug, aren't you?" said the Nun. "I don't want your clothes, your iron rod, or your gold fillet. Pull off one strand of that lifesaving hair behind your head and give it to me."

Pilgrim said, "These hairs were also your gift; I fear that if I pull one off, they will be broken up in such a way that they will no longer be able to save my life."

"You ape!" scolded the Nun. "You're so stingy that you'll not even uproot one hair!<sup>6</sup> That makes it difficult for me also to dispense my Goodly Wealth!"

Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Nun, you're truly suspicious! But as the saying goes, *if you don't have regard for the monk, at least have regard for a god*. I beg you to save my master from his ordeal."

Then the Nun *freely and gladly left the lotus seat and walked up the rocky cliff with scented steps. Since the holy monk was threatened with harm, she would subdue the fiend and give him help*. Highly pleased, the Great Sage Sun followed Guanyin out of the Tidal Sound Cave as the various deities stood at attention on the Potalaka Peak. "Wukong," said the Nun, "let's cross the ocean."

Pilgrim saluted and said, "Let the Nun go first."

"You go first," said the Nun.

Respecting, Pilgrim said, "Your disciple dares not display his power before the Nun. If I use the cloud somersault, my clothes may flip up, reveal my body, and I fear that the Nun will take offence at my irreverence."

When the Nun heard these words, she told the Dragon Girl Skilled in Wealth to pick from the lotus pond one petal of lotus flower and drop it into the ocean below the mountain ridge. Then she said to Pilgrim, "Get up on that lotus flower petal and I'll send you across the ocean."

Seeing the flower, Pilgrim said, "Nun, this petal of flower's so light and thin. How'd it bear me up? I'll tumble into the water for sure and won't my tiger-skin kilt be soaked? If it loses its tan, how can I wear it when the weather turns cold?"

"Get up there and see what happens!" shouted the Nun. Not daring to disobey, Pilgrim risked his life and jumped onto the flower. At first, it did seem rather light and small but when he alighted on it, he found that the flower was actually somewhat larger than a small boat. Delighted, Pilgrim said, "Nun, it should hold me."

"In that case," said the Nun, "why can't you cross the ocean?" Pilgrim said, "There is neither pole nor oar, neither sail nor mast. How could I cross the ocean?"

"No need for that," said the Nun who blew a mouthful of air lightly onto the lotus flower and immediately it drifted away from the shore. Another breath of the Nun sent Pilgrim across the bitter sea of the Southern Ocean<sup>7</sup> until he reached the other shore. When his feet touched solid ground again, Pilgrim laughed and said, "This Nun truly knows how to display her powers! She's able to summon old monkey hither and thither with no effort at all!"

The Nun then gave instructions for all the deities each to stand guard in his station, and for the Dragon Girl Skilled in Wealth to shut the gate of the cave. Mounting the auspicious cloud, she departed from the Potalaka Peak. When she reached the backside of the mountain, she called out, "Hui'an where are you?" Hui'an whose common name was Liberation, happened to be the second prince of the Pagoda Bearer Deity-King Li, and he, as the pupil taught personally by the Nun, never strayed from her side. His name was Disciple Hui'an, the Religion Guardian. Pressing his hands together before him, Hui'an saluted to the Nun who said to him, "Go quickly to the Region Above and borrow the Swords of Constellations from your Dad King."

"How many swords do you want, Teacher?" asked Hui'an. "The entire set," said the Nun.

Obedying her command, Hui'an mounted the clouds and went through the South Heaven Gate to reach the Palace of Cloudy Towers. He respected to his Dad King who asked him, "Why's my son come here?" Liberation replied, "Sun Wukong came to ask my teacher to subdue a fiend; she in turn told your child to borrow the Swords of Constellations from Dad King." The Deity-King at once asked Nata to take out the swords, all thirty-six of them, to hand over to Liberation who said to Nata, "Brother, please go and salute mum. I've urgent business; when I return the swords, I'll respect to her then."

They parted hurriedly; Liberation mounted the auspicious luminosity and returned to South Sea where he presented the swords to the Nun.

After she received them, the Nun threw them into the air as she recited a spell: the swords were transformed into a thousand-leaf lotus platform. Leaping up, the Nun sat solemnly in the middle. On one side, Pilgrim snickered to himself, "This Nun is so prudent and penurious! In that pond of hers she has her own five-coloured treasure lotus platform but she can't bear to use it. She has to borrow someone else's things!"

"Wukong," said the Nun, "stop talking! Follow me!"

They all mounted the clouds and left the ocean, the white cockatoo flying ahead while Great Sage Sun and Hui'an followed from behind. In a moment, they reached the peak of a mountain. "This is the Roaring Mountain," said Pilgrim, "and from here to the door of the monster-spirit is a distance of approximately four hundred miles."

When the Nun heard this, she lowered her auspicious cloud and recited a spell that began with the letter, *Ohm*. At once, various deities and demons appeared from the left and right of the mountain, all local spirits and mountain deities of the region. They came to respect before the Nun's treasure lotus seat. "Don't be alarmed, all of you," said the Nun. "I'm here to seize this demon king but I want you all to sweep this area clean. Not a single living creature's to remain within three hundred miles around here. Take the small beasts in their lairs, the young creatures in their nests, and send them up to the peak so that their lives may be preserved." The various deities obeyed and left; they returned shortly to report that their work was done. The Nun said, "If the region's cleared, all of you may return to your shrines."

She turned her immaculate vase upside down and all at once a torrent of water thundered forth. Truly it *surged over the summit and dashed over stone walls. Surging over the summit it seemed the swelling sea; dashing over stone walls it seemed the vast ocean. Black mists arose, damping the entire sky; green waves reflecting the sun beamed chilly light. The whole cliff gushed jade-like sprays; the whole sea sprouted gold lotus. The Nun let loose her awesome might, her sleeve revealed the Religion-body of Chan*. <sup>8</sup>*This place was changed to Potalaka's scene, truly a perfect image of South Sea. Udumbara bloomed from lovely rushes; fresh Palmyra leaves spread from scented grass. On purple bamboos the cockatoo paused; amid some green pines red partridges called. Waves ten thousand fold and lotus all around, hear the wind roar, the water surging up to Heaven*. When the Great Sage Sun saw this, he marvelled to himself, "Truly a Nun of great mercy and compassion! If old monkey had this kind of religion power, he'd simply pour the little vase on the mountain. Who cares about fowls and beasts, crawling or winged creatures?"

"Wukong," cried the Nun, "stretch forth your hand." Hurriedly rolling up his sleeve, Pilgrim stretched out his left hand. The Nun pulled out a twig of her willow branch after having dipped it in the sweet dew of her vase and wrote on his palm the word "Delusion." She said to him, "Hold your fist and go quickly to provoke battle with the monster-spirit. You're permitted not to win but to lose; let him defeat you and chase you back here. I've my power to subdue him."

Obedying the instruction, Pilgrim turned his cloudy luminosity and headed straight for the entrance of the cave. Holding his left hand in a fist and the iron rod with his right, he shouted, "Fiends, open the door!" Those little fiends again went inside to report, "Pilgrim Sun is here again."

"Shut the door tightly," said the monster king, "and don't mind him."

"Dear boy!" shouted Pilgrim. "You chased your old man out the door, and you still wouldn't open up!" The little fiends reported again: "Pilgrim Sun is using that little something to insult you." All the monster said was, "Don't listen to him!" After he had shouted for a couple of times and found the door still tightly shut, Pilgrim became enraged. He lifted the iron rod and with one blow punched a big hole in the door. The little fiends were so terrified that they ran inside, crying, "Pilgrim Sun has smashed our door!" When the monster king heard these reports and discovered that the front door was smashed, he bounded out the door and, holding the lance, yelled at Pilgrim, "You ape! You really don't know when to stop! I let you take some advantage of me and you're still not content. You dare come again to oppress me by smashing my door. What sort of punishment should you receive?"

"My child," said Pilgrim, "you dare chase your old man out your door. What sort of punishment should *you* receive?"

Embarrassed as well as enraged, the monster king picked up his lance and stabbed at Pilgrim's chest who also lifted his iron rod to parry and return the blow. They fought for four or five rounds when Pilgrim, still making a fist, retreated with his rod trailing behind him. The monster king stood still before the mountain and said, "I'm going to wash and scrub the Tang Monk instead."

"My dear boy," said Pilgrim, "Heaven is watching you! Won't you come?" When the monster-spirit heard these words, he grew even more enraged. With a yell, he dashed before Pilgrim and attempted to stab him with the lance once more. Our Pilgrim wielded his iron rod and fought with him for several rounds before retreating again. "Monkey," scolded the monster king, "you're able to fight before for at least twenty or thirty rounds. Why are you running away now when we're just settling down to do battle? Why?"

"Worthy child," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "your old man is afraid that you'll start a fire!" The monster-spirit said, "I'm not going to start the fire. You come up here."

"If you're not," said Pilgrim, "step over here. A gallant fellow should not beat up people in front of his own house." The monster-spirit, of course, did not know that this was a trick; he lifted his lance and gave chase once more. Dragging his rod, Pilgrim opened up his left fist and the monster king was completely deluded; all he had in mind was to give chase to his adversary. The one running ahead was like a falling meteor; the one chasing from behind was like an arrow leaving the bow.

In less than a moment, they saw the Nun. Pilgrim said, "Monster-spirit, I'm scared of you. Let me go. You've chased me to the South Sea, the residence of the Nun Guanyin. Why aren't you turning back?" The monster king refused to believe it; gritting his teeth, he persisted in his chase. Pilgrim with one shake of his body, slipped into the divine luminosity that surrounded the body of the Nun and disappeared. When the monster-spirit suddenly discovered that Pilgrim was gone, he walked up to the Nun with bulging eyes and said to her, "Are you the reinforcement Pilgrim Sun brought here?" The Nun did not reply. Rolling the lance in his hands, the monster king bellowed, "Hey! Are you the reinforcement Pilgrim Sun brought here?" Still the Nun did not reply. The monster-spirit lifted his lance and jabbed at the heart of the Nun who at once changed herself into a beam of golden light and rose into the air. Pilgrim followed her on her way up and said to her, "Nun, you're trying to take advantage of me! The monster-spirit asked you several times. How could you pretend to be deaf and dumb and not make any noise at all? One blow of his lance in fact chased you away, and you've even left behind your lotus platform."

"Don't talk," said the Nun, "let's see what he will do." At this time, Pilgrim and Liberation both stood in the air shoulder to shoulder and stared down; they found the monster-spirit laughing scornfully and saying to himself, "Brazen ape, you're mistaken about me! What sort of person do you think that I, Holy Child, happen to be? For several times you'd not prevail against me, and then you had to go and fetch some namby-pamby Nun. One blow of my lance now has made her vanish completely. Moreover, she has even left the treasure lotus platform behind. Well, let me get up there and take a seat." Dear monster-spirit. He imitated the Nun by sitting in the middle of the platform with hands and legs folded. When he saw this, Pilgrim said, "Fine! Fine! Fine! This lotus platform has been given to someone else!"

"Wukong," said the Nun, "what are you mumbling again?"

"Mumbling what? Mumbling what?" replied Pilgrim. "I'm saying that the lotus platform has been given to someone else. Look! It's underneath his thighs. You think he's going to return it to you?"

"I *wanted* him to sit there," said the Nun. "Well, he's smaller than you," said Pilgrim, "and it seems that the seat fits him even better than it fits you."

"Stop talking," said the Nun, "and watch the religion power." She pointed the willow twig downward and cried, "Withdraw!" All at once, flowers and leaves vanished from the lotus platform and the auspicious luminosity dispersed entirely. The monster king was sitting actually on the points of those swords. The Nun then gave this command to Liberation: "Use your demon-routing cudgel and strike back and forth at the sword handles."

Dropping from the clouds, Liberation wielded his cudgel as if he were demolishing a wall: he struck at the handles hundreds of times. As for that monster-spirit, both his legs were pierced till the points stuck out; blood spouted in pools as flesh and skin were torn. *Marvellous monster! Look at him!* Gritting his teeth to bear the pain, he abandoned the lance so that he could use both hands to try to pull the swords out from his body. "O Nun," said Pilgrim, "that fiendish creature's undaunted by the pain. He's still trying to pull out the swords."

When the Nun saw this, she said to Liberation, "Don't harm his life."

She then pointed downward again with her willow twig and recited a spell beginning with the letter, *Ohm*. Those Swords of Constellations all changed into inverted hooks, sharp and curved like the teeth of wolves that could not be pulled out at all. Only then was the monster-spirit overcome by fear. Holding onto the points of the swords, he pleaded pitifully in pain, "Nun, your disciple's eyes but no pupils and he'd not perceive your vast religion power. I beseech you to be merciful and spare my life. I'll never dare practice violence again. I'm willing to enter the gate of religion to receive your commandments."

When the Nun heard these words, she lowered her golden beam and approached the monster-spirit with her 2 disciples and the white cockatoo. “You’re willing to receive my commandments?” she asked.

Nodding his head as tears fell, the monster king said, “If you spare my life, I’m willing to receive the commandments.”

The Nun asked, “You wish to enter my fold?”

“If you spare my life,” replied the monster king, “I’m willing to enter the religion gate.”

“In that case,” said the Nun, “I’ll touch your head and give you the commandments.” She took out from her sleeve a golden razor and approached the fiend. With a few strokes, she shaved his hair off and turned it into the style of the Tai Mountain Crowning the Head: the top was completely bald but three tufts of hair were left around the edge so that they could be knotted together into three tiny braids. Grinning broadly on one side, Pilgrim said, “How unfortunate for this monster-spirit! He looks like neither boy nor girl! I don’t know what he looks like!”

“Since you’ve received my commandments,” said the Nun, “I’ll not treat you lightly. I’ll call you the Boy Skilled in Wealth. How’s that?” The fiend nodded his head in agreement, for all he hoped for was that his life be spared. The Nun pointed with her finger and called out, “Withdraw!” The Swords of Constellations dropped to the ground, and the boy did not bear even a single scar on his body.

Then the Nun said, “Hui’an, you take the swords back to Heaven to return them to your Dad King. You needn’t return here to meet me but go back to the Potalaka Peak to wait for me with the other deities.” Liberation obeyed and sent the swords back to Heaven before returning to the South Sea. The wildness in that boy had not been wholly removed. When he saw that his pains were gone and that his thighs had healed and, moreover, that the hair on his head had been made into three tiny braids, he picked up the lance and said to the Nun, “You don’t have any true religion power to subdue me! It’s a kind of chicanery, that’s all! I’ll not take your commandments! Watch the lance!” He lunged at the face of the Nun, and Pilgrim was so mad that he wielded his iron rod and was about to strike.

“Don’t hit him,” the Nun cried. “I’ve my punishment for him.” She took out from her sleeve a golden fillet, saying, “This treasure used to belong to our God who gave it to me when he sent me to search for the scripture pilgrim in the Land of the East. There were three fillets altogether: the Golden, the Constrictive, and the Prohibitive. The Constrictive Fillet was given to you first to wear while the Prohibitive Fillet was used to make the guardian of my mountain submit.<sup>9</sup> I’ve been unwilling to part with this Golden Fillet. Now that this fiend is so audacious, I’ll give it to him.”

Dear Nun! She took the fillet and waved it at the wind once, crying, “Change!” It changed into five fillets that she threw at the body of the boy, crying, “Hit!” One fillet enveloped the boy’s head while the rest caught his two hands and two feet. “Stand aside, Wukong,” said the Nun, “and let me recite for a while the Golden-Fillet Spell.” Horrified, Pilgrim said, “O Nun, I asked you to come here to subdue a fiend. Why do you want to cast that spell on me?”

“This spell,” said the Nun, “isn’t the Tight-Fillet Spell that’s the spell cast on you. It’s the Golden-Fillet Spell reserved especially for that boy.” Greatly relieved, Pilgrim stood to 1 side of her to listen to the Nun’s recital. Making the magic sign with her fingers, she went through her recitation several times, and the monster-spirit scratched his ears and clawed at his cheeks; he curled himself into a ball and rolled all over the ground. *Truly 1 word could reach the whole region of sand, this religion power so vast, boundless, and deep.*

**An evil demon at Black River captures the monk; the dragon prince of the Western Ocean catches the iguana**

The Nun went through her recitation several times before she stopped. As the pain subsided, the monster-spirit collected himself and sat up to discover that there were golden fillets clasped tightly around his neck, his wrists, and his ankles. He wanted to take them off but he could not even move them one whit. The treasure had taken root in the flesh, and the more he tried to loosen the fillets, the more painfully tight they felt. Laughing, Pilgrim said, “Darling boy! The Nun fears that you can’t be reared. That’s why she has made you wear a necklace and some bracelets!” Enraged by this remark, the youth picked up the lance once more and stabbed madly at Pilgrim. Dashing immediately behind the back of the Nun, Pilgrim cried, “Recite the spell! Recite the spell!”

The Nun dipped her willow twig in the sweet dew and sprinkled it at the youth, crying, “Close!” Look at him! He dropped the lance all at once, and his two hands were pressed together so tightly before his chest that he could not move them apart at all. This is thus the origin of the “Guanyin Twist,” a posture assumed by the attendant of the Nun which you can see in portraits and paintings to this day.

When the youth found that he could not use his hands nor could he pick up the lance, he realised at last how deep and mysterious the religion power was. He had no alternative but to salute in submission. The Nun then recited some magic words as she tilted the immaculate vase to one side; the ocean-full of water was retrieved entirely and not half a drop was left behind. She said to Pilgrim, “Wukong, this monster-spirit is vanquished but his unruliness has not been completely eliminated. Let me make him a salute with each step of the way – all the way back to the Potalaka Mountain – before I call off my power. Go quickly now into the cave to rescue your master.” Turning to respect to her, Pilgrim said, “I thank the Nun for taking the trouble of travelling for so great a distance. Your disciple should escort you for part of the journey.”

“No need for that,” said the Nun, “for I don’t want to jeopardize master’s life.”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he was delighted and respected again to take leave of the Nun. The monster-spirit thus returned to the right fruit; with 53 salutes he made submission to Guanyin. Sand-monk sat in the woods for a long time and waited in vain for Pilgrim to appear. At last, he put the luggage on the back of the horse, and with one hand holding the reins and the other the fiend-routing treasure staff, he left the pine forest to look toward the south. Shortly, he found a happy Pilgrim approaching. Sand-monk went forward to meet him, saying, “Elder Brother, why did it take you until now to return from your trip to seek assistance from the Nun? I almost died from the anxious waiting!”

“You’re still dreaming!” said Pilgrim. “Old monkey’s not only brought the Nun here but she has also subdued the fiend already.”

Then he gave a thorough account of the Nun’s exercise of her religion power and Sand-monk was exceedingly pleased, saying, “Let’s go then to rescue Master!”

The 2 of them leaped across the stream and dashed up to the cave entrance. After tying up the horse, they lifted their weapons together and broke into the cave to exterminate all the fiends. They then lowered the leather bag to free 8 Rules. “Elder Brother,” said Idiot after having thanked Pilgrim, “where’s that monster-spirit? Let me rake him a few times just to relieve my feelings!”

Pilgrim said, “Let’s find Master first,”

The 3 of them went to the rear and found their master bound in the courtyard, all naked and weeping. Sand-monk hurriedly untied the ropes and Pilgrim brought forth clothes for him to wear. The 3 of them then knelt down and said, “Master, you’ve suffered!”

Tripitaka thanked them, saying, “Worthy disciples, you’ve worked hard! How did you manage to subdue the demon?”

Pilgrim again gave a thorough account of how the Nun came to make submission of the youth, and when Tripitaka heard this, he quickly raised his hand up to salute toward the south. Pilgrim said, “No need to thank her for we’ve also been instrumental in providing her with the blessing of making submission of a young boy.”

This is thus the basis of what is heard even today about the boy who gave 53 salutes to Guanyin<sup>1</sup> and was given the vision of god after 3 salutes. Thereafter, Sand-monk was told to pick up all the treasures stored in the cave while the rest of the disciples found some rice to prepare for their master. That elder *retained his life all because of the Great Sage Sun; and acquired true scriptures, helped by the Handsome Monkey-Spirit*. Master and disciples found their way again and headed steadfastly toward the West after leaving the cave. They had travelled for more than a month when all at once the sound of flowing water filled their ears. “O disciples!” cried Tripitaka, highly startled, “where’s this sound of water coming from?”

“You old Master!” said Pilgrim, chuckling, “you’re so full of worries! There are four of us altogether but only you happen to hear some sort of water sound. You’ve quite forgotten again the *Heart Thread*.”

“The *Heart Thread*,” said the Tang Monk, “was imparted to me orally by the Crow’s Nest Zen Master of the Pagoda Mountain.<sup>2</sup> It has fifty-four sentences, overall, two hundred and seventy characters. I memorized it at the time and up till now, I’ve recited it often. Which sentence do you think I’ve forgotten?”

Pilgrim said, “Old Master, you’ve forgotten the one about ‘no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind.’ Those of us who’ve left the family should see no form with our eyes, should hear no sound with our ears, smell no smell with our noses, taste no taste with our tongues; bodies should’ve no knowledge of heat or cold, and minds should gather no vain thoughts. This is called the extermination of the Six Robbers.<sup>3</sup> But look at you now! Though you may be on your way to seek scriptures, your mind’s full of vain thoughts: fearing the demons you’re unwilling to risk your life; desiring vegetarian food you arouse your tongue; loving fragrance and sweetness you provoke your nose; listening to sounds you disturb your ears; looking at things and events you fix your eyes. You’ve in sum, assembled all the Six Robbers together. How’d you possibly get to the Western Heaven to see God?”

When Tripitaka heard these words, he fell into silent thought for a long time before he said, “O disciple! *Since I left our sage ruler that year, I’ve moved most diligently night and day: my sandals sweep open the mountain mists; coir hat bursts through the summit clouds. At night the apes wail to make me sigh; I grieve to hear in moonlight the bird cries. When’ll I end the work of Double Three<sup>4</sup> and acquire Siddhartha’s wondrous scripts?*”

When Pilgrim heard this, he could not refrain from clapping his hands and roaring with laughter, saying, “So Master just can’t get rid of his homesickness! If you want to complete the work of Double Three, there’s no difficulty! The proverb says, ‘Success will come when meritorious service is done.’”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “if we’ve to face all these evil barriers and wicked miasmas, we’ll never finish our meritorious service even after a millennium!”

Sand-monk said, “Second Elder Brother, you and I are very much alike, and we’d not rub Big Brother the wrong way with our foolish tongues and stupid mouths. Just concentrate on carrying the loads on our backs; there’ll be a day when the service’s completed.”

As master and disciples conversed, they proceeded steadily when they saw before them all at once a huge body of surging black water blocking the path of the horse. Standing at the shore, the four of them stared at the water carefully and they saw *tiers of dense billows; layers of turbid waves; tiers of dense billows like dark sap spilling; layers of turbid waves like black oil rolling. No reflection appears when you walk near; no trees or woods you can see from afar. Boiling, an earth full of ink! Rippling, a thousand miles of ashes! Like piles of charcoal water bubbles float; like overturned coals the breakers undulate. Cattle and sheep will not drink here; crows and magpies cannot fly over. Cattle and sheep won’t drink, disdaining the black; crows and magpies can’t fly, fearing the opaque. Only the shore’s reeds, rushes know the seasons, the bank’s flowers, and grass display their green. There are lakes, streams, rivers in all the world, many brooks, lagoons both great, and small that one in one’s life may come upon. But who’s seen the Black River of the West?* Dismounting, the Tang Monk said, “Disciples, why’s the water so black?”

8 Rules said, “Some families must have overturned their dye barrels!”

“If not,” said Sand-monk, “it has to be someone washing his brushes and ink-stones.” Pilgrim said, “Stop speculating and babbling, both of you! We’ve to find a way to get Master across.”

“If Old bull wants to cross this river,” said 8 Rules, “it’s not difficult: all I need to do is to mount the clouds or tread the waters, and I’ll cross it in the time of a meal.”

“If you ask old Sand,” said Sand-monk, “I, too, need only to mount the clouds or ride the waters, and I’ll cross it in no time.” Pilgrim said, “Of course, it’s easy for us but it’ll be difficult for Master.”

“Disciples,” said Tripitaka, “how wide is the river?”

“Approximately ten miles,” said 8 Rules. Tripitaka said, “You three had better determine which of you’ll carry me across.” Pilgrim said, “Eight Rules can do it.”

“No, I can’t,” said 8 Rules. “For if I carry him on my back and try to mount the clouds, I can’t even rise three feet from the ground. As the proverb says, ‘A mortal is heavier than a mountain!’ If I carry him and tread water, he will push me down below with him.”

While master and disciples were having this discussion by the river, they suddenly saw a man approaching from the upper reach of the river and rowing a small boat. Delighted, the Tang Monk said, “Disciples, we’ve a boat. Ask him to take us across.” Shouting loudly, Sand-monk called, “Boatman, come and ferry us across this river.” The man in the boat said, “I don’t have a ferry boat. How could I take you across?” Sand-monk said, “In Heaven or on Earth, the most important thing is to perform deeds of kindness to others. Though yours may not be a ferry boat, we’re not people who will often bother you. We’re the sons of God sent by imperial command in the land of the East to acquire scriptures. Please be kind to us and take us across the river. You’ll have our gratitude.” When the man heard these words, he rowed the boat near the shore and, holding his oar, he said, “Master, my boat is small and there are many of you. How could I take you all across?”

When Tripitaka walked closer and took a look, he saw that the boat was actually a canoe dug out of a log and its hull could at most seat only two persons besides the boatman. “What’ll we do?” said Tripitaka.

“With this boat,” said Sand-monk, “we’ll have to take two trips.”

Always sly and slothful, 8 Rules immediately said, “Awakened to Purity, you and Big Brother can remain here to watch the luggage and the horse. Let me escort Master and cross over first. Then the boat can return to take you and the horse. Big Brother can simply leap across.”

Nodding, Pilgrim said, “You’re right.”

After Idiot had helped the Tang Monk into the boat, the boatman punted the boat away from shore and began rowing it forward. As they approached the middle of the river, a violent gust of wind suddenly arose with a roar, whipping up the waves to darken the sky and the sun. Marvellous wind! *In mid-air a band of dark clouds rises up; in midstream black waves surge a thousand tiers tall. At both banks flying sand blots out the sun; on all sides trees fall to this Heaven-shaking howl. Seas and rivers overturned, dragon gods take fright; mud and dirt flown up, plants and flowers fade. The wind roars like thunder in times of spring and growls like a famished tiger on and on! Crabs, turtles, shrimps, and fishes salute; fowl and beast have all lost their nests and lairs. The sailors of 5 Lakes are victims all; the households of 4 Seas all fear for their lives. If fishers in the stream can’t lower their hooks; how’d the river’s boatmen punt their poles? With tiles and bricks upturned the houses fall; with Heaven and Earth shaken, Mount Tai quakes.* This wind was called up by the man rowing the boat who happened to be a fiendish creature in this Black River. The disciples saw with their own eyes that the Tang Monk and Bullseye 8 Rules along with the boat were sinking into the water. In no time at all, they vanished without a trace. Deeply dismayed on the shore, Sand-monk and Pilgrim

cried, "What'll we do? The old master faces adversity every step of the way. He just escaped from one demonic ordeal and journeyed safely for a little while before he is in the clutches again of these black waters."

Then Sand-monk said, "Could it be that the boat has capsized? Perhaps we'd search for them downstream."

"No," said Pilgrim, "it couldn't be, for if the boat had capsized, 8 Rules with his aquatic skills could easily have picked up Master and trod water to carry him out. Just now I thought I saw something perverse about that boatman. I suppose that fellow must have called up the wind and dragged Master beneath the water." When Sand-monk heard these words, he said, "Elder Brother, why didn't you speak up earlier? You watch the luggage and the horse. Let me go into the water to search for them." Pilgrim said, "The colour of this water is hardly normal. I don't think you'd go in there."

"You think this water's more formidable than my Flowing-Sand River?" asked Sand-monk. "I can go! I can go!"

Dear monk! Taking off his shirt and his socks, he lifted up his fiend-routing treasure staff and dove into the waves with a splash. Opening up the water before him, he went forward in big strides. Just as he was walking, he heard the sound of someone speaking. Sand-monk stepped to one side to sneak a glance around and he discovered ahead of him a pavilion; across its front door were written these large characters: "Hengyang Ravine, Residence of the Black River God." Then he heard the fiendish creature, sitting in the pavilion, say, "I've gone through some hard times and only now have I found something nice. This monk is a good man who has practiced self-cultivation for ten disciples. If I manage to eat a piece of his flesh, I'll be a man of longevity who never grows old. I've waited for him long enough, and today I've realised my hopes. Little ones, bring out the iron cages quickly. Steam these two monks whole while I prepare an invitation card to be sent to our second uncle. We want to celebrate his birthday for him."

When Sand-monk heard these words, he could not restrain the fire leaping up in his heart. Lifting his treasure staff, he banged madly at the door, crying, "Brazen creature! Send out quickly my master, the Tang Monk, and my brother 8 Rules." The little demons standing guard at the door were so frightened that they dashed inside to report, "Disaster!"

"What sort of disaster?" asked the old fiend.

The little fiends said, "There's a monk with gloomy complexion outside. He's banging on our door and demanding the return of some monks."

When the fiend heard these words, he at once asked for his armour that was brought out by the little fiends. After the old fiend suited himself up properly, he took up in his hands a steel riding crop with bamboo-like joints.<sup>5</sup> *As he walked out the door, he looked mean and vicious indeed! See a square face and round eyes flashing colours bright; curled lips and a mouth like a bloody bowl. A few sparse whiskers wave like iron wires; his temple's flanked by hair like cinnabar. He has the form of Jupiter revealed and the face of a thunder god in rage. He wears a suit of iron flower-adorned, a gold helmet with jewels thickly set. He holds the steel crop with bamboo-like joints and violent wind churns as he walks along. At birth he was a creature of the waves; he shed his origin. What fearsome change! Ask for this fiend's true identity: small iguana-dragon is his former name.* "Who is beating on my door?" bellowed the fiend.

Sand-monk said, "You ignorant brazen fiend! How dare you use your paltry magic and change into a ferryman to abduct my master here with your boat? Return him at once and I'll spare your life."

The fiend roared with laughter and said, "This monk doesn't care about his life! Your master's been caught by me alright and now I'm about to have him steamed to be served to my invited guests. You come up here and match strength with me. If you can withstand me for three rounds, I'll return your master. If you can't withstand me, I'll have you steamed and eaten also. Don't bother to dream about your going to the Western Heaven!"

Maddened by what he heard, Sand-monk brought the treasure staff down on the fiend's head but the latter raised his steel crop to parry the blow. The 2 of them thus began a fierce battle at the bottom of the river. *With fiend-routing staff and crop of bamboo joints 2 men, growing enraged, both strove to win. 1, the Black River's millennium-old fiend; 1, a former mortal of Divine Mists. This one longed to eat Tripitaka's flesh; that 1 would guard the Tang Monk's piteous life; at the river's bottom they met to fight, each craving success and nothing else. They fought till pairs of shrimp and fish concealed themselves, till crabs and turtles in twos withdrew their heads. Hear the water-home's fiends all beat their drums and monsters shouting madly before their gate. This dear Awakened to Purity – what a true Religious priest – did show all alone his prowess and strength!* Waves tossed and churned and they fought to a draw as the crop met and tangled with the staff. Think of it! It was all for the monk of Tang who would seek scriptures and salute in God's Heaven. The 2 of them fought for some thirty rounds and neither proved to be the stronger. Sand-monk thought to himself, *This fiendish creature's indeed my match. Since I can't prevail, I may as well entice him out of the waters so that my elder brother can beat him.*

Making one final feeble blow, Sand-monk turned quickly and ran with the staff trailing behind him. The monster-spirit however, did not give chase and said instead, "You may go! I'm going to fight with you no more for I've to prepare a card to invite a guest."

Panting heavily, Sand-monk leaped out of the water and said to Pilgrim, "Elder Brother, this creature's unruly!"

"Since you're down there for quite a while, did you find out what sort of monster he's?" asked Pilgrim. "Have you seen Master?"

"There's a pavilion down there," said Sand-monk, "and across the top of the gate outside are written these large characters: Hengyang Ravine, Residence of the Black River God. I sneaked up to it and heard him speaking inside, telling his little ones to wash and scrub some iron cages so that Master and 8 Rules can be steamed alive. He also wanted to invite his uncle to come for a birthday celebration. I got mad and pounded at the door; that was when the fiendish creature came out with a steel crop with bamboo-like joints. He fought with me for this half a day, about thirty rounds in all, and it was a draw. I faked defeat, thinking that I'd lure him out here so that you'd help me. But that fiendish creature was quite smart. He refused to chase me; all he wanted to do was to prepare his card to invite his guest. I came back up then."

"What sort of a monster is he?" asked Pilgrim. Sand-monk replied, "He looks like a big turtle, or else he has to be an iguana."

"I wonder," said Pilgrim, "who is his uncle?"

Hardly had he finished speaking when a man emerged from a bend downstream. Kneeling down at a distance, he cried, "Great Sage, the water god of the Black River respects to you."

"Could you be that monster who rowed the boat," said Pilgrim, "returning to deceive me again?" The old man respected and wept, saying, "Great Sage, I'm not a monster. I'm the true god of this river. It was the fifth month of last year during high tide that this monster-spirit arrived from the Western Ocean, and he immediately waged a battle against me. An old and feeble person like myself could not withstand him, of course, and he therefore took by force my official residence, the Hengyang Ravine. Since he had also taken the lives of many of my water kin, I'd no choice but to file suit against him in the ocean. I didn't expect that the Dragon King of the Western Ocean was his maternal uncle who threw out my plaint and told me instead that I'd allow the monster to stay in my home. I wanted to go to Heaven to bring charges but a humble deity and minor official like me would not get an audience with the Jade Emperor. When I heard that the Great Sage had arrived, I came especially to see you. I beg the Great Sage to exert his great power on my behalf and avenge my wrongs."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he said, "According to what you've said, the Dragon King of the Western Ocean is definitely guilty. Now this monster-spirit has abducted my master and my younger brother, boasting that he wants to have them steamed and served to his maternal uncle for his birthday. I was about to try to seize this fiend when luckily you came to inform me. All right, river god, you stay here and stand guard with Sand-monk. Let me go into the ocean to bring the Dragon King here so that he can capture the creature."

"I'm deeply indebted to the Great Sage's kindness," said the river god. Pilgrim at once mounted the clouds and went straight to the Western Ocean. He stopped his somersault and, making the water-repellent sign with his fingers, he divided the waves and walked right in. As he travelled, he ran into a black fish-spirit, holding a golden box and darting up like an arrow from the depths down below. Pilgrim whipped out his iron rod and gave his head a terrific blow: alas, the brains burst out and the jaw bones cracked open. With a swish, the corpse drifted up to the water surface. When Pilgrim opened the box, he saw an invitation card inside on which this message was written:

Your foolish nephew, Clean Iguana, touches his head to the ground a hundred times to inform you, Venerable Mr. Ao, my esteemed Second Uncle. Frequently I've enjoyed your goodly gifts, for which I'm most grateful. I've recently acquired two creatures who happen to be monks from the Land of the East. Since they are rare treasures in the world, your nephew dares not enjoy them by himself. As I recall that Uncle's sacred birthday is near, I've specially prepared a small banquet to wish you the addition of a millennium. It is my earnest hope that you'll honour us with your presence.

"This fellow," said Pilgrim chuckling to himself, "has handed over a formal complaint first to old monkey!" He put the card in his sleeve and proceeded. Soon a Nature spirit on patrol saw him and darted quickly back to the Water-Crystal Palace to make the report: "Great King, Dad Great Sage Equal to Heaven, has arrived." The Dragon King Aoshun at once led his water kinsmen out of the palace to receive his visitor. "Great Sage," he said, "please enter this small palace and take a seat, so that we may present you with tea."

"I've not yet drunk your tea," said Pilgrim, "but you've drunk my juice first." Smiling, the Dragon King said, "Since the Great Sage has made submission in the gate of God, he no longer touches meat or juice. Since when have you invited me to drink?"

"You've not gone to drink juice," said Pilgrim, "but you've committed a crime of drinking nonetheless." Greatly startled, Aoshun said, "What kind of crime has this small dragon committed?" Taking the card out of his sleeve, Pilgrim handed it over to the Dragon King.

When the Dragon King read it, his spirit left him and his soul fled. Hurriedly going to his knees, he respected and said, "Great Sage, please pardon me! That fellow is the ninth child of my sister. Because my brother-in-law had made an error in administering wind and rain by not releasing the prescribed amount, the Heavenly Judge issued a decree and he was beheaded by the human judge, Wei Zheng, during a dream.<sup>6</sup> My sister had no place to go and it was your little dragon who brought her here and had her cared for. Year before last she died of illness but since her son did not have a home, I told him to stay at the Black River where he could nourish his nature and cultivate the arts of realised mortality. I didn't expect him to commit such wicked crimes. This little dragon will send someone immediately to arrest him."

"How many sons did your sister have?" asked Pilgrim. "Are they all monsters somewhere?" The Dragon King said, "My sister has nine sons altogether but eight of them are good ones. The first, Little Yellow Dragon, lives in the Huai River; the second, Little Black Dragon, lives in the Ji River; the third, Blue-Backed Dragon, lives in the Yangzi River; the fourth, Red-Whiskered Dragon, lives in the Yellow River; the fifth, Futile Dragon, strikes the bell for the Religious Patriarch; the sixth, Reclining-Beast Dragon, guards the roof beam in the palace of the Daoist Patriarch; the seventh, Reverent Dragon, guards the imperial commemorative arches for the Jade Emperor; and the eighth, Sea-Serpent Dragon, remains at the place of my elder brother and guards the Taiyue Mountain of Shanxi Province. The ninth son is the Iguana Dragon; because of his youth and lack of official appointment, he was told last year to live in the Black River to nourish his nature. When he acquired a name, I'd have transferred him to another post. I didn't anticipate that he would disobey my decree and offend the Great Sage."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he smiled and said, "How many husbands did your sister have?"

"Only one," said Aoshun, "and he was the Dragon King of the Jing River who was beheaded. My sister lived here as a widow and died year before last."

"One husband and one wife," said Pilgrim. "How could they manage to produce so many different kinds of offspring?" Aoshun said, "This is what the proverb means when it says that 'A dragon will produce nine species, and each species is different from the others.'"

Pilgrim said, "Just now I was so vexed that I was about to use the invitation card as evidence and file suit against you at the Heavenly court, charging you with conspiracy with a fiend and kidnapping. But according to what you've told me, it's really the fault of that fellow who disobeys your instructions. I'll pardon you this time – for the sake of my relationship with you and your brothers, and on account of the fact that that dragon is young and ignorant after all. And also, you've no knowledge of that matter. Quickly dispatch someone to arrest him and rescue my master. We'll then decide what to do next."

Aoshun at once gave this command to the prince, Moang: "Call up immediately five hundred young soldiers of shrimps and fishes; arrest that iguana and bring him back here for indictment. Meanwhile, let us prepare some juice and a banquet as our apology to the Great Sage."

"Dragon King," said Pilgrim, "you needn't be so edgy. I told you just now that I'd pardon you. Why bother to prepare juice and food? I must go now with your son, for I fear that Master may be harmed and my brother is waiting for me."

Unable to detain his guest with even desperate pleadings, the old dragon asked one of his daughters to present tea. Pilgrim drank one cup of the fragrant tea while standing up and then took leave of the old dragon. He and Moang led the troops from the Western Ocean and soon arrived in the Black River. "Worthy Prince," said Pilgrim, "take care to catch the fiend. I'm going ashore."

"Have no worry, Great Sage," said Moang. "This little dragon will arrest him and take him up here for the Great Sage to convict him of his crime. Only after your master has been sent up also will I dare take him back to the ocean to see my dad." Very pleased, Pilgrim left him and made the water-repellent sign with his fingers to leap out of the waves. As he reached the eastern shore, Sand-monk (who led the river god to meet him) said, "Elder Brother, you left by the air but why did you return from the river?" Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how he slew the fish-spirit, acquired the invitation card, confronted the Dragon King, and led troops back with the dragon prince. Sand-monk was exceedingly pleased; all of them then stood on the bank to wait to receive their master. Prince Moang sent a soldier of his to go before the water residence and make this announcement to the fiend: "Prince Moang has been sent here by the Venerable Dragon King of the Western Ocean." The fiend was sitting inside when he heard this report and thought to himself, "I sent the black fish-spirit to present an invitation card to my second maternal uncle, and I've not received any answer since. Why is it that my uncle has not come? Why has he sent my elder cousin instead?" As he was thus deliberating with himself, a little fiend sent out to patrol the river also returned to make this report: "Great King, there is a regiment of soldiers stationed to the west of our water residence, and one of the banners has these words clearly written: Young Marshal Moang, Crown Prince of the Western Ocean." "This elder cousin's indeed arrogant," said the fiend. "I suppose my uncle can't come and that's why the prince's been sent in his place to attend our banquet. But if he's coming for a banquet, why bring along soldiers and warriors? Aha! I fear that there's another reason behind this. Little ones, bring out my armour and have my steel crop ready for I fear that he may turn violent suddenly. Let me go out to receive him and see what's happening."

Having received this instruction, all the little fiends rubbed their fists to prepare themselves. When the iguana-dragon walked out of the door, he saw that there was in truth a regiment of marine soldiers encamped on the right. He saw *banners with sashes aflutter; halberds arranged in bright mists; treasure swords amassing lustre; long lances twirling flower tassels; curved bows like many new moons; arrows as wolves’ teeth stuck up; scimitars big and gleaming; short cudgels both rough and hard. Sea serpents, oysters, whales, crabs, turtles, fishes, shrimps – big and small they stood in order, their weapons dense and thick like hemp. If the general did not command it, who’d dare step out of line one bit?* The iguana fiend went before the gate of the camp and cried out in a loud voice, “Big Cousin, your younger brother awaits you respectfully. Please come out.”

A snail on patrol in the camp went hurriedly to the middle tent to report, “Your Highness, the iguana-dragon is outside calling for you.”

Pressing down the golden helmet on his head and tightening the treasure belt around his waist, the prince picked up a three-cornered club<sup>7</sup> and ran out of the camp in great strides. “Why did you ask me to come out?” he asked.

Saluting, the iguana-dragon said, “Your younger brother sent an invitation card to Uncle this morning. But I suppose he has declined my invitation and sent you instead. If my Big Cousin is here for the banquet, why have you called up the troops? You didn’t enter the water residence but you pitched camp here instead. And you even put on armour and held a weapon. Why?”

“Why did you invite your uncle to come?” asked the prince.

The fiend replied, “It was his kindness which bestowed this place on me as a residence but I’ve not seen him for a long time nor have I’d an opportunity to express my filial love for him. Yesterday I happened to have caught a monk from the Land of the East who, so I’ve heard, possesses an original body that has practiced self-cultivation for ten disciples. If a person eats him, his age will be lengthened. I was hoping to ask Venerable Uncle to look this monk over before I put him in an iron cage and have him steamed for Venerable Uncle to celebrate his birthday.”

“You’re so dim-witted!” shouted the prince. “Who do you think this monk is?”

“He is a monk from the Tang court,” said the fiend, “a priest on his way to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures.” The prince said, “You know only that he is the Tang Monk but you don’t know how formidable his disciples are.” The fiend said, “He has under him a monk with a long horn whose name is Bullseye 8 Rules. I’ve caught him also and am about to have him steamed and eaten together with the Tang Monk. There is another disciple of his by the name of Sand-monk, a fellow rather dark in colour and gloomy in complexion who uses a treasure staff. Yesterday this monk made a demand in front of my door for the return of his master but I called out the river troops to face him. Several blows from my steel crop made him flee for his life. I don’t see how he could be called formidable!”

“You’re ignorant!” said the prince. “The Tang Monk’s still another disciple, his eldest who happens to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, a golden mortal of the Great Monad who did cause great disturbance in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago. Now he is the guardian of the Tang Monk on his way to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven, and his name has been changed to Pilgrim Sun Wukong at the time of his conversion by the great and merciful Nun Guanyin of the Potalaka Peak. Don’t you’ve any other thing to do but to cause such a great disaster as this? It was that Pilgrim Sun who ran into your messenger in our ocean; he took your invitation card and went straight into the Water-Crystal Palace, charging us dad and son with the crimes of ‘conspiracy and kidnapping.’ You’d better send the Tang Monk and 8 Rules back to the shore of the river immediately and return them to the Great Sage Sun. You can then rely on my apologies to him to preserve your life. But if you utter only half a ‘No,’ you might as well forget about your life or any further opportunity to live in this place!”

When the fiend heard this statement, he grew terribly angry, saying, “I’m an intimate first cousin of yours. How could you side with someone else? If I listen to you, I’ll have to send out the Tang Monk – just like that! You think there’s such an easy thing in this whole wide world? You may be afraid of that Sun Wukong but you think I’m afraid of him, too? If he has any ability, let him come to the front of my water residence and fight with me for three rounds. I’ll return his master then but if he can’t withstand me, I’ll capture him also and have him steamed together with his master. I’ll not recognise any relative, nor will I invite any more guests! I’ll shut my door and ask my little ones to recite and exercise. I’ll take the honoured seat above to enjoy myself. You bet I’ll eat his mum’s!”

When the prince heard this, he opened his mouth wide and expostulated, “You brazen demon! You’re truly audacious! Let’s not ask the Great Sage Sun to face you. Do you dare hold a contest with me?”

“If I want to be a hero,” said the fiend, “you think I’ll be afraid of any contest?” He shouted to his little fiends, “Bring me my armour!”

His cry immediately made those little fiends on his left and right bring up his armour and the steel crop. Changing their colours all at once, the two of them unleashed their strength and gave the order for the drums to sound on both sides. This battle was quite different from the previous one in which Sand-monk took part. You saw *flags and banners luminous; spears and halberds ablaze. On that side the camps were quickly broken; on this side the doors were widely open. Prince Moang held high his golden club met by fiend iguana wielding his crop. The cannon’s one boom made river soldiers fierce; 3 strokes of the gong aroused marine troops. Shrimps fought with shrimps; crabs strove with crabs; the whale swallowed the red carp; the bream downed the yellow zhang; <sup>8</sup>the shark devoured the mullet and the mackerel fled; the rock oyster caught the clam and the mussel panicked. Hard like an iron rod was the stingray’s whip; sharp like a razor was the swordfish’s jaw. The sturgeon chased the white eel; the whitebait seized the black pomfret. A river full of water fiends took up the fight; dragon troops on both sides did join the fray and brawled for a long time as billows churned. Mighty as Indra was the prince Moang who with a cry brought down his golden club and caught the king of mischief, the iguana fiend.* Holding his 3-cornered club, the prince feigned an opening and the monster-spirit, not realising that it was faked, lunged forward to attack. Sidestepping quickly from his opponent’s charge, the prince brought the club down hard on the monster-spirit’s right arm and knocked him to the ground. The prince rushed up to him and gave him another kick that sent him sprawling. The marine soldiers all surged forward to pin the monster-spirit to the ground; his arms were bull-tied behind his back and his chest bone was pierced and bound with an iron chain. He was taken up to the shore to appear before Pilgrim Sun as the prince said, “Great Sage, your little dragon’s caught the monster iguana. Let the Great Sage decide what’ll be done with him.”

When Pilgrim saw this, he said to the monster-spirit, “You’ve been disobedient to what you’re told. When your Venerable Uncle gave you permission to live here, he intended for you to nourish your nature to preserve your body. At the time when you acquired a name, he would have transferred you to another post. How dare you use force to occupy the residence of the water god and abuse the kindness of your elders? How dare you exercise your paltry magic to deceive my master and my younger brother? I’d like to give you a stroke of my rod but this rod of old monkey is quite heavy. One slight touch and your life will be finished. Let me ask you instead where have you placed my master?” Respecting without ceasing, the fiend said, “Great Sage, this little iguana has no knowledge of the Great Sage’s reputation. Just now, I violated reason and morality to resist my elder cousin who had me arrested. Now that I’ve seen you, I’m eternally grateful to the Great Sage for sparing my life. Your master is still tied up in the water residence. I beg the Great Sage to loosen my iron chain and untie my hands. Let me go into the river and escort him out here.”

On one side Moang said, “Great Sage, this is a rebellious fiend and most devious. If you turn him loose, I fear that he may plot something wicked.”

“I know his residence,” said Sand-monk, “let me go and find Master.”

He and the river god at once leaped into the waves and went to the water residence down below where they found the doors wide open but not a single little fiend. When they walked inside to reach the pavilion, they found the Tang Monk and 8 Rules still bound there and completely naked. Sand-monk hurriedly untied his master as the river god loosened the ropes on 8 Rules, after which they placed the freed prisoners on their backs and darted back to the surface of the water. When 8 Rules discovered the monster-spirit on the shore all tied up with ropes and chains, he lifted his rake and wanted to strike him, crying, “You perverse beast! You still want to eat me?” Pilgrim tugged at him, saying, “Brother, let’s spare him. Have regard for the feelings of Aoshun and his son.” Saluting, Moang said, “Great Sage, your little dragon dares not linger any longer. Since we’ve succeeded in rescuing your master, I must bring this fellow back to see my dad. Though the Great Sage has spared his life, my dad will most certainly not permit him to go unpunished. He will dispose of him in some way, I’m sure, and then we’ll report to the Great Sage along with our apologies once more.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “you may take him and leave. Please salute your Honoured Dad for me and I’ll thank him in person another time.”

The prince at once led the marine soldiers and the monster-spirit into the water where they found their way directly back to the Great Western Ocean. The river god of the Black River gave thanks to Pilgrim saying, “I’m deeply indebted to the Great Sage for the recovery of my water residence.” The Tang Monk said, “Disciples, we’re still stranded on the eastern shore. How shall we cross this river?” The river god said, “Venerable Dad, please do not worry and mount your horse. This humble deity will open up a path for Venerable Dad to cross the river.” The master indeed climbed onto the white horse while 8 Rules held the reins, Sand-monk poled the luggage, and Pilgrim took up the rear. The river god then exercised his magic of blocking the water; as the upper reaches of the river were dammed up, the lower part of the river soon turned dry, and a wide road was thus created. Master and disciples walked safely to the western shore and, after thanking the river god, they proceeded to high ground to set out again on their way. So it was that *with help the Chan monk could now face the West; with no waves on earth, they could cross Black River.*

#### 044

#### The religion-body in primal cycle meets the force of the cart; the mind, righting monstrous deviates, crosses the spine-ridge pass

The poem says:

*To seek scriptures and freedom they go to the west, an endless toil through countless mounts of fame.  
The days fly by like darting hares and crows; as petals fall and birds recite the seasons go.  
A little dust – the eye reveals 3000 worlds; the priestly staff – its head’s seen 400 isles.  
They feed on wind and rest on dew to seek their goal, ‘not knowing which day they may all return.*

Tripitaka Tang and his disciples found the main road to the West. Truly they had to face the wind and brave the snow, to be capped by the moon and cloaked by the stars. They journeyed for a long time and soon it was the time of early spring. See *the cycled return of triple yang; <sup>2</sup>the radiance of all things. The cycled return of triple yang makes all Heavens beguiling like a painted scroll; the radiance of all things means flowers spread brocade through all the earth. The plums fade to a few specks of snow; the grains swell with the valley clouds. Ice breaks gradually and mountain streams flow; seedlings sprout completely and un-parched. Truly it is that a god of the Year rides forth; a god of the Woods takes a drive. Warm breezes waft floral fragrance; light clouds renew the light of the sun. Willows by the wayside spread their curved green; the rains give life; all things bear the looks of spring.* As master and disciples travelled slowly along the road, enjoying the scenery as they proceeded, they suddenly heard a loud cry that seemed the roar of ten thousand voices. Tripitaka Tang was so startled that he immediately pulled in his reins and refused to go forward. Turning back, he said, “Wukong, where did that terrible din come from?”

“Yes, it sounded as if the earth were splitting apart and the mountains were toppling,” said 8 Rules.

“More like the crack of thunder I’d say,” said Sand-monk.

Tripitaka said, “I still think it’s men shouting or horses neighing.”

With a chuckle, Pilgrim Sun said, “None of you has guessed correctly. Stop here and let old monkey go take a look.” *Dear Pilgrim!* He leaped up at once and rose into mid-air, treading on the cloudy luminosity. He peered into the distance and discovered a moated city; when he looked more carefully, he saw that it was veiled by auspicious luminosity after all and not by any baleful vapour. “This is a nice place,” Pilgrim thought to himself. “Why’d there be such an ear-splitting roar? There’re no banners or spears in sight in the city and what we heard couldn’t possibly be the roar of cannons. Why’s it then that we hear this hubbub of men and horses?” As he was thus thinking to himself, a large group of monks came into his sight: on a sandy beach outside the city gate they were trying to pull a cart up a steep ridge. As they strained and tugged, they cried out in unison to call on the name of the Nun King Powerful for help, and this was the noise that startled the Tang Monk. Pilgrim lowered his cloud gradually to take a closer look. *Aha!* The cart was loaded with bricks, tiles, timber, earth clods, and the like. The ridge was exceedingly tall and leading up to it was a small spine-like path flanked by 2 perpendicular passes with walls like 2 giant cliffs. *How’d the cart possibly be dragged up there?* Though it was such a fine warm day that one would expect people to dress lightly, what the monks had on were virtually rags. *They looked destitute indeed!* Pilgrim thought to himself, “I suppose they must be trying to build or repair a monastery and since a region like this undoubtedly yields a bountiful harvest, it must be difficult for them to find part-time labourers. That’s why these monks themselves have to work so hard.”

As he was thus speculating, he saw two young Daoists swagger out of the city gate. They were dressed in *star caps crowned their heads; brocades draped their bodies; luminous star caps crowned their heads; colourful brocades draped their bodies. Cloud-headed boots<sup>3</sup> held up their feet; fine silk sashes tied up their waists. Like full moons their faces were handsome and bright; they had the fair forms of jade-Heaven gods.* When the monks saw the 2 Daoists, they were terrified; every 1 of them redoubled his effort to pull desperately at the cart. “So, that’s it!” said Pilgrim, comprehending the situation all at once. “These monks must be awfully afraid of the Daoists, for if not, why’d they be tugging so hard at the carts? I’ve heard someone say that there’s a place on the road to the West where Daoism’s revered and Religion’s set for destruction. This must be the place. I’d like to go back and report this to Master but I still don’t know the whole truth and he might blame me for bringing him surmises, saying that even a smart person like me can’t be counted on for a reliable report. Let me go down there and question them thoroughly before I give Master an answer.”

He would question. *Dear Great Sage!* He lowered his cloud and with a shake of his torso, he changed at the foot of the city into a mendicant Daoist of the Complete Truth order with an exorcist hamper hung on his left arm. Striking a hollow wooden fish with his hands and reciting stanzas of Daoist themes, he walked up to the two Daoists near the city gate. “Masters,” he said, saluting, “this humble Daoist raises his hand.”

Returning his salute, one of the Daoists said, “Sir where did you come from?”

“This disciple,” said Pilgrim, “has wandered to the comers of the sea and to the edges of Heaven. I arrived here this morning with the sole purpose of collecting subscriptions for good works. May I ask the two masters which street in this city is favourable toward the Dao, and which alley is inclined toward piety? This humble Daoist would like to go there and beg for some vegetarian food.” Smiling, the Daoist said, “O Sir! Why do you speak in such a disgraceful manner?”

"What do you mean by disgraceful?" asked Pilgrim.

"If you want to *beg* for vegetarian food," said the Daoist, "isn't that disgraceful?" Pilgrim said, "Those who have left the family live by begging. If I didn't beg where would I've money to buy food?"

Chuckling, the Daoist said, "You've come from afar, and you don't know anything about our city. In this city of ours, not only the civil and military officials are fond of the Dao, the rich merchants and men of prominence devoted to piety but even the ordinary citizens, young and old will salute to present us once they see us. It is in fact a trivial matter, hardly worth mentioning. What's most important about our city is that His Majesty, the king, is also fond of the Dao and devoted to piety."

"This humble cleric is first of all quite young," said Pilgrim, "and second, he is indeed from afar. In truth I'm ignorant of the situation here. May I trouble the two masters to tell me the name of this place and give me a thorough account of how the king has come to be so devoted to the cause of Dao – for the sake of fraternal feelings among us Daoists?" The Daoist said, "This city has the name of the Cart Slow Kingdom, and the ruler on the precious throne is a relative of ours."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he broke into loud guffaws, saying, "I suppose that a Daoist has become king."

"No," said the Daoist. "What happened was that twenty years ago, this region had a drought, so severe that not a single drop of rain fell from the sky and all grains and plants perished. The king and his subjects, the rich as well as the poor – every person was burning incense and praying to Heaven for relief. Just when it seemed that nothing else could preserve their lives, three mortals suddenly descended from the sky and saved us all."

"Who were these mortals?" asked Pilgrim.

"Our masters," said the Daoist.

"What are their names?" asked Pilgrim. The Daoist replied, "The eldest master is called the Tiger-Strength Great Mortal; the second master, the Deer-Strength Great Mortal; and the third master, Goat-Strength Great Mortal."

"What kinds of magic power do your esteemed teachers possess?" asked Pilgrim. The Daoist said, "Summoning the wind and the rain for my masters would be as easy as flipping over one's palms; they point at water and it will change into oil; they touch stones and change them into gold, as quickly as one turns over in bed. With this kind of magic power, they are thus able to rob the creative genius of Heaven and Earth, to alter the mysteries of the stars and constellations. The king and his subjects have such profound respect for them that all of us Daoists are claimed as royal kin."

Pilgrim said, "This ruler is lucky, all right. After all, the proverb says, 'Magic moves ministers!' He certainly can't lose to claim kinship with your old masters, if they possess such powers. Alas! I wonder if I'd even the tiniest spark of affinity, such that I'd have an audience with the old masters." Chuckling, the Daoist replied, "If you want to see our masters, it's not difficult at all. The two of us are their bosom disciples. Moreover, our masters are so devoted to the Way and so deferential to the pious that the mere mention of the word 'Dao' would bring them out of the door, full of welcome. If we two were to introduce you, we'd need to exert ourselves no more vigorously than to blow away some ashes."

Saluting deeply, Pilgrim said, "I'm indebted to you for your introduction. Let us go into the city then."

"Let's wait a moment," said one of the Daoists. "You sit here while we two finish our official business first. Then we'll go with you." Pilgrim said, "Those of us who have left the family are without cares or ties; we're completely free. What do you mean by official business?" The Daoist pointed with his finger at the monks on the beach and said, "Their work happens to be the means of livelihood for us. Lest they become indolent, we've come to check them off the roll before we go with you." Smiling, Pilgrim said, "You must be mistaken, Masters. Religious and Daoists are all people who have left the family. For what reason are they working for our support? Why are they willing to submit to our roll call?"

The Daoist said, "You've no idea that in the year when we're all praying for rain, the monks saluted to God on one side while the Daoists petitioned the Pole Star on the other, all for the sake of finding some food for the country. The monks however, were useless, their empty recites of *Threads* wholly without efficacy. As soon as our masters arrived on the scene, they summoned the wind and the rain and the bitter affliction was removed from the multitudes. It was then that the court became terribly vexed at the monks, saying that they were completely ineffective and that they deserved to have their monasteries wrecked and their God images destroyed. Their travel rescripts were revoked and they were not permitted to return to their native regions. His Majesty gave them to us instead and they were to serve as bondsmen: they are the ones who tend the fires in our Abbey who sweep the grounds, and who guard the gates. Since we've some buildings in the rear that are not completely finished, we've ordered these monks here to haul bricks, tiles, and timber for the construction. But for fear of their mischief, indolence, and unwillingness to pull the cart, we've come to investigate and make the roll call."

When Pilgrim heard that, he tugged at the Daoists as tears rolled from his eyes. "I said that I might not have the good affinity to see your old masters," he said, "and true enough I don't."

"Why not?" asked the Daoist.

"This humble Daoist is making a wide tour of the world," said Pilgrim, "both for the sake of eking out a living and for finding a relative."

"What sort of relative do you've?" asked the Daoist. Pilgrim said, "I've an uncle who since his youth had left the family and shorn his hair to become a monk. Because of famine some years ago he had to go abroad to beg for alms and hadn't returned since. As I remembered our ancestral benevolence, I decided that I'd make a special effort to find him along the way. It's very likely, I suppose, that he is detained here and cannot go home. I must find him somehow and get to see him before I can go inside the city with you."

"That's easy," said the Daoist. "The two of us can sit here while you go down to the beach to make the roll call for us. There should be five hundred of them on the roll. Take a look and see if your uncle is among them. If he is, we'll let him go for the sake of the fact that you, too, are a fellow Daoist. Then we'll go inside the city with you. How about that?"

Pilgrim thanked them profusely, and with a long salute he took leave of the Daoists. Striking up his wooden fish, he headed down to the beach, passing the double passes as he walked down the narrow path from the steep ridge. All those monks knelt down at once and respected, saying in unison, "Dad, we've not been indolent. Not even half a person from the five hundred is missing – we're all here pulling the cart." Snickering to himself, Pilgrim thought, "These monks must have been awfully abused by the Daoist. They are terrified even when they see a fake Daoist like me. If a real Daoist goes near them, they will probably die of fear." Waving his hand, Pilgrim said, "Get up, and don't be afraid! I'm not here to inspect your work, I'm here to find a relative." When those monks heard that he was looking for a relative, they surrounded him on all sides, every one of them sticking out his head and coughing, hoping that he would be claimed as kin. "Which of us is his relative?" they asked. After he had looked at them for a while, Pilgrim burst into laughter. "Dad," said the monks, "you don't seem to have found your relative. Why are you laughing instead?"

Pilgrim said, "You want to know why I'm laughing? I'm laughing at how immature you monks are! It was because of your having been born under an unlucky star that your parents, for fear of your bringing misfortune upon them or for not bringing with you additional brothers and sisters, turned you out of the family and made you priests. How could you then not follow the Three Jewels and not revere the law of God? Why aren't you reading the *Threads* and reciting the litanies? Why do you serve the Daoists and allow them to exploit you as bondsmen and slaves?"

"Venerable Dad," said the monks, "are you here to ridicule us? You must have come from abroad, and you've no idea of our plight."

"Indeed I'm from abroad," said Pilgrim, "and I truly have no idea of what sort of plight you've."

As they began to weep, the monks said, "The ruler of our country is wicked and partial. All he cares for are those persons like you, Venerable Dad, and those whom he hates are us Religious."

"Why is that?" asked Pilgrim. "Because the need for wind and rain," said one of the monks, "caused three mortal elders to come here. They deceived our ruler and persuaded him to tear down our monasteries and revoke our travel rescripts, forbidding us to return to our native regions. He would not, moreover, permit us to serve even in any secular capacity except as slaves in the household of those mortal elders. Our agony is unbearable! If any Daoist mendicant shows up in this region, they would immediately request the king to grant him an audience and a handsome reward; but if a monk appears, regardless of whether he is from nearby or afar, he will be seized and sent to be a servant in the house of the mortals."

Pilgrim said, "Could it be that those Daoists are truly in possession of some mighty magic, potent enough to seduce the king? If it's only a matter of summoning the wind and the rain, then it is merely a trivial trick of heterodoxy. How could it sway a ruler's heart?"

The monks said, "They know how to manipulate cinnabar and refine lead, to sit in meditation in order to nourish their spirits. They point to water and it changes into oil; they touch stones and transform them into pieces of gold. Now they are in the process of building a huge abbey for the Three Pure Ones<sup>4</sup> in which they can perform rites to Heaven and Earth and read scriptures night and day to the end that the king will remain youthful for ten millennia. Such enterprise undoubtedly pleases the king."

"So that's how it is!" said Pilgrim. "Why don't you all run away and be done with it?"

"Dad, we can't!" said the monks. "Those mortal elders have obtained permission from the king to have our portraits painted and hung up in all four quarters of the kingdom. Although the territory of this Cart Slow Kingdom is quite large, there is a picture of monks displayed in the marketplace of every village, town, county, and province. It bears on top the royal inscription that any official who catches a monk will be elevated three grades, and any private citizen who does so will receive a reward of fifty taels of white silver. That's why we can never escape. Let's not say monks – but even those who have cut their hair short or are getting bald will find it difficult to get past the officials. They are everywhere, the detectives and the runners! No matter what you do, you simply can't flee. We've no alternative but to remain here and suffer."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "you might as well give up and die."

"Venerable Dad," said the monks, "many of us have died. There're altogether some two thousand monks caught and brought here: some six or seven hundreds of them have perished because they'd not bear the suffering and the persecution, endure the cold, nor adjust to the climate. Another seven or eight hundred committed suicide. Only we five hundred failed to die."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Pilgrim.

The monks said, "When we tried to hang ourselves, the ropes snapped; when we tried to cut ourselves, the blades were blunt; when we hurled ourselves into the river, we floated back up instead; and when we took poison, nothing happened to us." Pilgrim said, "You're very lucky! Heaven must be desirous of prolonging your lives!"

"The last word is not quite right, Venerable Dad," said the monks, "for surely you mean prolonging our torments! Our daily meals are thin gruel made of the coarsest grains, and at night, we've nowhere to rest but this exposed piece of sandy beach. When we close our eyes however, there will be deities here to protect us."

"You mean the hard work during the day," said Pilgrim, "causes you to see ghosts at night."

"Not ghosts," said the monks, "but the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of Light, together with the Guardians of Monasteries. When night falls, they will appear to protect us and in fact prevent those who want to die from dying."

Pilgrim said, "These gods are rather unreasonable. They should rather let you die early so that you'd reach Heaven at once. Why are they guarding you like that?" The monks said, "They try to comfort us in our dreams, telling us not to seek death but to endure our suffering for a while until the arrival of the holy monk from the Great Tang in the Land of the East, the *Arhat* who is journeying to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. Under him, we're told, there is a disciple who is the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, and who has vast magic powers. He is, moreover, a person of rectitude and kindness, one who will avenge the injustices of the world, assist those who are needy and oppressed, and comfort the orphans and the widows. We're told to wait for his arrival, for he will reveal his power and destroy the Daoists, so that the teaching of Chan and complete poverty will be honoured once more."

When Pilgrim heard these words, he said silently to himself, smiling, "*Don't say old monkey has no competence for gods proclaim early his eminence.*"

Turning quickly and striking up again the wooden fish, he left the monks to return to the city gate to meet the Daoists. "Sir," said the Daoists as they greeted him, "which of them is your relative?"

"All five hundred of them are relatives of mine," said Pilgrim. Laughing, the two Daoists said, "How could you've that many relatives?"

"One hundred are neighbours to my left," said Pilgrim, "and one hundred are neighbours to my right; one hundred belong to my dad's side, and one hundred belong to my mum's side. Finally, one hundred happen to be my bond-brothers. If you're willing to let these five hundred persons go, I'll be willing to enter the city with you. If you're not, I'll not go with you."

The Daoists said, "You must be a little crazy, for all at once you're babbling! These monks happen to be gifts from the king. If we want to release even one or two of them, we'll have to go first before our masters to report that they are ill. Then, we've to submit a death certificate before we can consider the matter closed. How could you ask us to release them all? Nonsense! Nonsense! Why, not to speak of the fact that we'd be left without servants in our household but even the court might be offended. The king might send some officials to look into the work here or he himself might come to investigate. How could we dare let them go?"

"You'll not release them?" said Pilgrim.

"No, we'll not!" said the Daoists. Pilgrim asked them 3 times and his anger flared up. Whipping out his iron rod from his ear, he squeezed it once in the wind and it had the thickness of a rice bowl. He tested it with his hand before slamming it down on the Daoists' heads. *How pitiful!* This 1 blow made *their heads crack, blood squirt, bodies sink low, skin split, necks snap, and brains outflow!*

Those monks on the beach when they saw in the distance that he had slain the Daoists, all abandoned the cart and ran toward him, crying, "What disaster! You've just killed royal kin."

"What royal kin?" asked Pilgrim.

The monks had him completely surrounded crying, "Their masters would not salute the king when they walk into court, and when they walk out, they need not take leave of the lord. His Majesty addresses them constantly as Messrs. Preceptors of State, Elder Brothers. How could you come here and cause such a terrible disaster? Their disciples came out to this place to supervise our work and they did not offend you. How could you beat them to death? If those mortal elders claimed that you're here only to supervise our labour and that we're the ones who took their lives, what'd happen to us? We must go into the city with you and have you confess your guilt first."



"Stop hollering, all of you," said Pilgrim, laughing. "I'm no mendicant Daoist of the Complete Truth order. I'm here to save you."

"You've murdered two men," said the monks, "and we're likely to be blamed for it. Look what you've added to our burdens! How could you be our saviour?"

Pilgrim said, "I'm Pilgrim Sun Wukong, the disciple of the holy monk of the Great Tang. I've come especially to save your lives."

"No! No!" cried the monks. "You can't be, for we can recognise that venerable dad."

"You've not even met him," said Pilgrim, "so how could you recognise him?" The monks said, "We've met in our dreams an old man who identified himself as the Gold Star Venus. He told us over and over again how Pilgrim Sun was supposed to look so that we'd not make a mistake in identifying him."

"What did he tell you?" asked Pilgrim. The monks said, "He said that the Great Sage's *a bumpy brow, golden eyes flashing; round head, a hairy face jowl-less; gaping teeth, pointed mouth, a character most sly; he looks stranger than thunder god. Using a golden-hooped iron rod, once broke Heaven's gates apart. He now follows Truth, protecting a monk, and saves humankind from distress.*"<sup>5</sup>

When Pilgrim heard these words, he was both pleased and annoyed; pleased, because the gods had spread wide his fame but also annoyed, because those old rogues, he thought, had revealed to mortals his primal form. He blurted out all at once, "Indeed all of you can see that I'm not Pilgrim Sun but I'm a disciple of his, just learning how to cause some trouble for fun! Look over there! Isn't that Pilgrim Sun who is approaching?" He pointed to the East with his finger and tricked the monks into turning their heads. As they did so, he revealed his true form that the monks recognised immediately. Every one of them went to his knees, saying, "Dad, we're of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, and we failed to know that you appeared to us in transformation. We beg Dad to avenge our wrongs and dispel our woes by entering the city quickly and exterminating the demonic ones."

"Follow me," said Pilgrim, and the monks all followed him closely.

The Great Sage walked to the beach. Exerting his magic power, he yanked the cart through the two passes and up the spine ridge before picking it up and smashing it to pieces. He then tossed all those bricks, tiles, and timber down a ravine. "Go away!" he bellowed to the monks. "Don't crowd around me. Let me see the king tomorrow and destroy those Daoists."

"O Dad!" said those monks. "We dare not go very far away, for we fear that we might be caught by the officials. Then we'd be brought back for beatings and for ransom, and there would be no end to our woes."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "let me give you some means of protection."

Dear Great Sage! He plucked a handful of hairs that he chewed into small pieces. To each of the monks he gave a piece with the instruction: "Stick it into the nail of your fourth finger and then make a fist. You can walk as far as you want. Don't do anything if no one comes to seize you but if there should be someone trying to arrest you, hold your fist up tightly and cry, 'Great Sage Equal to Heaven.' I'll come at once to protect you."

"Dad," said the monks, "if we walk too far away and you can't see or hear us, what good will it do?"

"Relax," said Pilgrim, "for even if you're ten thousand miles away, I guarantee that nothing will happen to you."

One of the monks who was somewhat courageous indeed held up his fist and whispered, "Great Sage Equal to Heaven." At once a thunder spirit stood in front of him, holding an iron rod. He looked so formidable that not even a thousand cavalry would dare charge near him. Several scores of the monks made the call also, and several scores of Great Sages at once appeared. The monks respected, crying, "Dad, truly an efficacious manifestation!"

"When you want it to disappear," said Pilgrim, "all you've to say is the word, 'Cease.'"

They cried, "Cease!"

And the hairs appeared again in their nails. The monks were overjoyed and began to disperse. "Don't go too far away," said Pilgrim, "but listen for news of me in the city. If a proclamation requesting for monks to return to the city is published, you may then enter the city and give me back my hairs."

Those 500 monks then scattered in all directions. The Tang Monk by the wayside while he waited in vain for Pilgrim to come back with a report, he told Bullseye 8 Rules to lead the horse forward toward the West. As they proceeded, they met some monks hurrying by, and when they drew near the city, they saw Pilgrim standing there with a dozen or so monks who had not dispersed. Reining in his horse, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, you're sent here to find out about the strange noise. Why did it take you so long and still you didn't return?"

Leading those monks to salute the Tang Monk's horse, Pilgrim gave a thorough account of what had happened. Horrified, Tripitaka said, "If this is the situation, what'll we do?"

"Please have no fear, Venerable Dad," said those monks. "Dad Great Sage Sun is an disciple of a Heavenly god, and his vast magic powers will no doubt prevent you from coming to any harm. We're priests of the Wisdom Depth Monastery of this city, an edifice built by imperial command of the late king, the dad of the present ruler. Since the image of the late king is still inside the monastery, it has not been torn down along with all the other monasteries, big and small, of the city. Let us invite the venerable dad to go into the city and rest in our humble dwelling. We're certain that the Great Sage Sun will know what to do by the time of the morning court tomorrow."

"What you say is quite right," said Pilgrim. "All right! We might as well enter the city first."

The elder dismounted and went up to the city gate. The sun was setting as they walked across the drawbridge and inside the triple gates. When people on the streets saw that priests from the Wisdom Depth Monastery were toting luggage and leading a horse, they all drew back and avoided them. Before long they reached the entrance of the monastery where they saw hanging high above the gate a huge plaque on which was written in gold letters: "The Wisdom Depth Monastery, Built by Imperial Command." Pushing open the gates, the monks led them through the Vairocana Hall. They then opened the door to the main hall; the Tang Monk draped the cassock over his body and saluted himself before the golden image. Only after he had paid homage to God in this manner did he walk inside the main hall. "Hey, you who are looking after the house!" cried the monks, and an old priest emerged. When he saw Pilgrim, he fell on his knees at once and cried, "Dad, have you arrived?"

"Who am I?" asked Pilgrim. "Why should you address me and honour me in this manner?"

"I recognise you to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, the Dad Sun," said the priest. "Every night we dream of you for the Gold Star Venus frequently appears to us in our dreams, telling us that we can preserve our lives only when you come to us. Today, I can tell immediately that you're the one whom we saw in our dreams. O Dad, I'm so glad that you've arrived in time. After one or two more days, we may all become ghosts!"

"Please rise! Please rise!" said Pilgrim with laughter. "Tomorrow you'll see some results!" The monks all went to prepare for them a vegetarian meal, after which they swept clean the abbot's residence for the pilgrims to rest. Pilgrim however, was so preoccupied that he could not sleep even by the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> watch. From somewhere nearby also came the sound of pipes and gongs, and he became so aroused that he rose quietly and slipped on his clothes. He leaped into mid-air to have a better look and at once discovered that there was the bright glare of lamps and torches due south of him. Lowering his cloud, he peered intently and found that the Daoists of the 3 Pure 1s Abbey were making supplications to the stars. He saw *the spiritual realm of a tall chamber; the blessed place of a magic hall. The spiritual realm of a tall chamber, august like the features of Mount Penglai; the blessed place of a magic hall, immaculate like the Palace of Transformed Joy. Daoists on both sides played their strings and pipes; masters at the centre held up their tablets of jade. They expounded the Woe-Dispelling Litany; lectured on the Classic of the Way and Virtue. To raise dust a few times they wrote out their charms; make the supplication they saluted themselves. With spell and water they sent a dispatch as flames of torches shot up to the Region Above. They sought and questioned the stars as fragrant incense rose through the azure sky. Before the stands were fresh offerings; on top of tables were victuals sumptuous.* On both sides of the hall's entrance was hung a pair of yellow silk scrolls on which the following parallel couplet in large characters was embroidered:

*For wind and rain in due season,*

*We invoke the Celestial Worthies? boundless power.*

*As the empire's peaceful and prosperous,*

*May our lord's reign exceed 10 millennia*

There were three old Daoists resplendent in their ritual robes, and Pilgrim thought they had to be the Tiger-Strength, Deer-Strength, and Goat-Strength Mortals. Below them there was a motley crew of some seven or eight hundred Daoists; lined up on opposite sides, they were beating drums and gongs, offering incense, and saying prayers. Secretly pleased, Pilgrim said to himself, "I'd like to go down there and fool with them a bit but as the proverb says, *a silk fibre's no thread; a single hand can't clap.* Let me go back and alert Eight Rules and Sand-monk. Then we can return and have some fun."

Putting his auspicious cloud on a descending path, he headed straight back to the abbot's hall where he found 8 Rules and Sand-monk asleep head to foot in 1 bed. Pilgrim tried to wake Awakened to Purity first and as he stirred, Sand-monk said, "Elder Brother, you're not asleep yet?"

"Get up now," said Pilgrim, "for you and I are going to enjoy ourselves."

"In the dead of night," said Sand-monk, "how could we enjoy ourselves when our mouths are dried and our eyes won't stay open?"

Pilgrim said, "There's indeed in this city an Abbey of the Three Pure Ones. Right now the Daoists in the Abbey are conducting a mass and their main hall is filled with all kinds of offerings. The buns are big as barrels, and their cakes must weigh fifty or sixty pounds each. There are also countless rice condiments and fresh fruits. Come with me and we'll go enjoy ourselves!"

When Bullseye 8 Rules heard in his sleep that there were nice edibles, he immediately woke up, saying, "Elder Brother, aren't you going to take care of me, too?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "if you want to eat, don't make all these noises and wake up Master. Just follow me."

The two of them slipped on their clothes and walked quietly out the door. They trod on the cloud with Pilgrim and rose into the air. When Idiot saw the flare of lights, he wanted immediately to go down there had not Pilgrim pulled him back. "Don't be so impatient," said Pilgrim. "Wait till they disperse. Then we can go down there." 8 Rules said, "But obviously they are having such a good time praying. Why would they want to disperse?"

"Let me use a little magic," said Pilgrim, "and they will."

Dear Great Sage! He made the magic sign with his fingers and recited a spell before he drew in his breath facing the ground toward the southwest. Then he blew it out and at once a violent whirlwind assailed the 3 Pure Ones Hall, smashing flower vases and candle stands and tearing up all the ex-votes hanging on the 4 walls. As lights and torches were all blown out, the Daoists became terrified. Tiger-Strength Mortal said, "Disciples, let's disperse. Since this divine wind has extinguished all our lamps, torches, and incense, each of us should retire. We can rise earlier tomorrow morning to recite a few more scrolls of scriptures and make up for what we miss tonight."

The various Daoists indeed retired. Our Pilgrim leading 8 Rules and Sand-monk, lowered their clouds and dashed up to the 3 Pure Ones Hall. Without bothering to find out whether it was raw or cooked, Idiot grabbed one of the cakes and gave it a fierce bite. Pilgrim whipped out the iron rod and tried to give his hand a whack. Hastily withdrawing his hand to dodge the blow, 8 Rules said, "I've not even found out the taste yet and you're trying to hit me already?"

"Don't be so rude," said Pilgrim. "Let's sit down with proper manners and then we may treat ourselves."

"Aren't you embarrassed?" asked 8 Rules. "You're stealing food, you know, and you still want proper manners! If you're invited here, what'd you do then?"

Pilgrim said, "Who are these Nuns sitting up there?"

"What do you mean by who are these Nuns?" chuckled 8 Rules. "Can't you recognise the Three Pure Ones?"

"Which Three Pure Ones?" asked Pilgrim.

"The one in the middle," said 8 Rules, "is the Celestial Worthy of Commencement; the one on the left is the Daoist Lord of Numinous Treasures; and the one on the right is the Most High Aged Lord, Laozi." Pilgrim said, "We've to take on their appearances. Only then can we eat safely and comfortably." When he caught hold of the delicious fragrance coming from the offerings, Idiot could wait no longer. Climbing up onto the tall platform, he gave the figure of Laozi a shove with his horn and pushed it to the floor, saying, "Old fellow, you've sat here long enough! Now let Old bull take your place for a while!" So 8 Rules changed himself into Laozi while Pilgrim took on the appearance of the Celestial Worthy of Commencement and Sand-monk became the Daoist Lord of Numinous Treasures. All the original images were pushed down to the floor. The moment they sat down, 8 Rules began to gorge himself with the huge buns. "Could you wait one moment?" said Pilgrim. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "we've changed into their forms. Why wait any longer?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "it's a small thing to eat but giving ourselves away is no small matter! These holy images we pushed on the floor could be found by those Daoists who had to rise early to strike the bell or sweep the grounds. If they stumbled over them, wouldn't our secret be revealed? Why don't you see if you can hide them somewhere?" 8 Rules said, "This is an unfamiliar place, and I don't even know where to begin to look for a hiding spot."

"Just now when we entered the hall," Pilgrim said, "I chanced to notice a little door on our right. Judging from the foul stench coming through it, I think it must be a Bureau of Five-Grain Transmigration. Send them in there."

*Idiot's in truth rather good at crude labour!* He leaped down, threw the 3 images over his shoulder, and carried them out of the hall. When he kicked open the door, he found a huge privy inside. Chuckling to himself he said, "This Ban-Horse-Plague's truly a way with words! He even bestows on a privy a sacred title! The Bureau of Five-Grain Transmigration, what a name!" Still hauling the images on his shoulders, Idiot began to mumble this prayer to them: *"O Pure Ones Three, I'll confide in thee: from afar we came, staunch foes of bogies. We'd like a treat but nowhere is cosy. We*

*borrow your seats for a while only. You've sat too long, now join the privy. In times past you've enjoyed countless good things by being pure and clean Daoists. Today you can't avoid facing something dirty when you become Celestial Worthies Most Smelly!"*

After he had made his supplication, he threw them inside with a splash and half of his robe was soiled by the muck. As he walked back into the hall, Pilgrim said, "Did you hide them well?"

"Well enough," said 8 Rules, "but some of the filth stained my robe. It still stinks. I hope it won't make you retch."

"Never mind," said Pilgrim, laughing, "you just come and enjoy yourself. I wonder if we'd all make a clean getaway!" After Idiot changed back into the form of Laozi, the three of them took their seats and abandoned themselves to enjoyment. They ate the huge buns fist; then they gobbled down the side dishes, the rice condiments, the dumplings, the baked goods, the cakes, the deep-fried dishes, and the steamed pastries – regardless of whether these were hot or cold. Pilgrim Sun however, was not too fond of anything cooked; all he had were a few pieces of fruit, just to keep the other two company. Meanwhile 8 Rules and Sand-monk went after the offerings like comets chasing the moon, like wind mopping up the clouds! In no time at all, the food was completely devoured. When there was nothing left for them to eat, instead of leaving, they remained seated there to chat and wait for the food to digest.

*Alas! This was what'd to happen!* There was in the east corridor a young Daoist who just when he had lain down, scrambled up again all at once when he thought to himself, "I left my hand-bell in the hall. If I lost it, the masters would rebuke me tomorrow." He said to his companion, "You sleep first. I've to go find something." Without even putting on his undergarments, he threw a shirt on himself and went to the main hall to search for his bell. Gropping this way and that in the darkness, he finally found it. As he was turning to leave, he suddenly heard sounds of breathing. Terribly frightened, the Daoist began to rush out of the hall, and as he did so, he stepped on a lychee seed that sent him crashing to the floor and the bell was smashed to pieces. Unable to restrain himself, Bullseye 8 Rules burst into roars of laughter, frightening the little Daoist out of his wits. He scrambled up only to fall down once more; stumbling all over, he managed to reach the master residence. "Grand-Masters," he screamed as he pounded on the door, "It's terrible! Disaster!"

The 3 old Daoists had not yet fallen asleep. They opened the door to ask, "What disaster?"

Trembling all over, the young Daoist said, "Your disciple left behind his hand-bell and went to the main hall to search for it. I heard someone roaring with laughter and it almost frightened me to death." When the old Daoists heard these words, they cried, "Bring some light. Let's see what kind of perverse creature's around." The Daoists sleeping along the 2 corridors old, young, were all aroused, and at once scrambled up to the main hall with lamps and torches.

## 045

### At the 3 Pure 1s Abbey the Great Sage leaves his name; at the Cart Slow Kingdom the Monkey King shows his power

The Great Sage Sun used his left hand to give Sand-monk a pinch and his right to give Bullseye 8 Rules a pinch. Immediately understanding what he meant, the 2 of them fell silent and sat with lowered faces on their high seats. They allowed those Daoists to examine them back and front with uplifted lamps and torches but the 3 of them seemed no more than idols made of clay and adorned with gold.

"There're no thieves around," said the Tiger-Strength Mortal, "but why're all the offerings eaten then?"

"It definitely looks as if humans have eaten them," said the Deer-Strength Mortal. "Look how the fruits are skinned and their stones spat out. Why's it that we see no human form?"

"Don't be too suspicious, Elder Brothers," said the Goat-Strength Mortal. "I think that our piety and sincerity of reciting scriptures and saying prayers here night and day, all in the name of the court, must have aroused the Celestial Worthies. The Venerable Dads of the Three Pure Ones, I suppose, must have descended to earth and consumed these offerings. Why don't we take advantage of the fact that their holy train and crane carriages are still here and make supplication to the Celestial Worthies? We'd beg for some golden elixir and holy water with which we may present His Majesty. Wouldn't his long life and perpetual youth be in fact our merit?"

"You're right," said the Tiger-Strength Mortal. "Disciples, start the poems and recite the scriptures. Bring us our ritual robes. Let me tread the stars to make our supplication."

Those little Daoists all obeyed and lined themselves up on both sides. At the sound of the gong, they all recited in unison the scroll of *True Scriptures of the Yellow Court*. After having put on his ritual robe, the Tiger-Strength Mortal held high his jade tablet and began to kick up the dust with dancing. Intermittently he would fall to the ground and salute himself. Then he intoned this petition: *"In fear and dread, we salute most humbly. To stir up our faith we seek Purity. Vile priests we quell to honour the Way. This hall we build the king to obey. Dragon flags we raise and offerings display; torches by night, incense by day. One thought sincere does Heaven sway. Chariots divine now come to stay. Grant unto us some elixir and holy water that we may give to His Majesty that he may gain longevity."*

When 8 Rules heard these words, he was filled with apprehension. "This is our fault! We've eaten the goods and should be on our way. Now, how shall we answer such supplication?" Pilgrim gave him another pinch before suddenly opening his mouth and speaking out loud, "You mortals of a younger generation, please stop your recitation. We've just returned from the Festival of Mortal Peaches, and we've not brought along any golden elixir or holy water. In another day we'll come to bestow them on you." When those Daoists, old and young, heard that the image had actually spoken, every one of them trembled violently till even their garments quaked. "O Dads!" they cried, "the living Celestial Worthies have descended to earth. We must not let them go. We must insist on their giving us some sort of magic formula for eternal youth."

Then the Deer-Strength Mortal went forward also to salute himself and intone this supplication: *"Our heads to the dust, we pray eamestly. Your subjects submit to the Pure Ones Three. Since we came here, the Way's set free. The king's pleased to seek longevity. This Heavenly Mass recites scriptures nightly. We thank the Celestial Worthies for revealing their presence holy. O hear our prayers! We seek your glory! Do leave some holy water behind that your disciples' long life may find!"*

Sand-monk gave Pilgrim a pinch and whispered fiercely, "Elder Brother! They're at it again! Just listen to the prayer!"

"All right," said Pilgrim, "let's give them something."

"Where'd we find it?" muttered 8 Rules. "Just watch me," said Pilgrim, "and when you see that I've it, you'll have it too!" After those Daoists had finished their poems and their prayers, Pilgrim again spoke out loud, "You mortals of a younger generation, there's no need for your saluting and praying any longer. I'm rather reluctant to leave you some holy water but I fear then that our posterity will die out. If I gave you some however, it would seem to be too easy a boon." When those Daoists heard these words, they all saluted themselves and respected. "We beseech the Celestial Worthies to have regard for the reverence of your disciples," they cried, "and we beg you to leave us some. We'll proclaim far and near the Way and Virtue. We'll memorialise to the king to give added honours to the Gate of Mystery."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "bring us some vessels." The Daoists all touched their heads to the ground to give thanks. Being the greediest, the Tiger-Strength Mortal hauled in a huge cistern and placed it in the hall. The Deer-Strength Mortal fetched an earthenware garden vase and put it on top of the offering table. The Goat-Strength Mortal pulled out the flowers from a flowerpot and placed it in the middle of the other two vessels. Then Pilgrim said to them, "Now leave the hall and close the shutters so that the Heavenly mysteries will not be seen by profane eyes. We'll leave you some holy water." The Daoists retreated from the hall and closed the doors, after which they all saluted themselves before the vermilion steps.

Pilgrim stood up at once and, lifting up his tiger-skin kilt, filled the flowerpot with his stinking urine. Delighted by what he saw, Bullseye 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, you and I've been brothers these few years but we've never had fun like this before. Since I gorged myself just now, I've been feeling the urge to do this." Lifting up his clothes, Idiot let loose such a torrent that it sounded as if the Liuliang Cascade<sup>1</sup> had crashed onto some wooden boards! He pissed till he filled the whole garden vase. Sand-monk, too, left behind half a cistern. They then straightened their clothes and resumed their seats solemnly before they called out, "Little ones, receive your holy water."

Pushing open the shutters, those Daoists respected repeatedly to give thanks. They carried the cistern out first, and then they poured the contents of the vase and the pot into the bigger vessel, mixing the liquids together. "Disciples," said the Tiger-Strength Mortal, "bring me a cup so that I can have a taste." A young Daoist immediately fetched a teacup and handed it to the old Daoist. After bailing out a cup of it and gulping down a huge mouthful, the old Daoist kept wiping his mouth and puckering his lips. "Elder Brother," said the Deer-Strength Mortal, "is it good?"

"Not very good," said the old Daoist, his lips still pouted, "the flavour is quite potent!"

"Let me try it also," said the Goat-Strength Mortal, and he, too, downed a mouthful. Immediately he said, "It smells somewhat like bull urine!" Sitting high above them and hearing this remark, Pilgrim knew that he could no longer fool them. He thought to himself, "I might as well display my abilities and leave them our names too."

He cried out in a loud voice, "O Daoists, Daoists, you're so silly! Which Three Pure Ones would be so worldly? Let our true names be told most clearly. Monks of the Great Tang go West by decree. We come to your place this fine night carefree. Your offerings eaten, we sit and play. Your *salutes* and greetings how'd we repay? That's no holy water you drank. It's only the urine we pissed that stank!"

The moment the Daoists heard this, they barred the door. Picking up pitchforks, rakes, brooms, tiles, rocks, and whatever else they could put their hands on, and they sent these hurtling inside the main hall to attack the impostors. Dear Pilgrim! Using his left hand to catch hold of Sand-monk and his right to take hold of 8 Rules, he crashed out of the door and mounted the cloudy luminosity to go straight back to the Wisdom Depth Monastery. When they arrived at the abbot's residence, they dared not disturb their master; each went to bed quietly and slept until the third quarter of the fifth watch. At that time, of course, the king began to hold his morning court where two rows of civil and military officials – some four hundred of them – stood at attention. See *bright lamps and torches midst purple gauze; fragrant clouds rising from treasure tripods*. As soon as Tripitaka Tang woke up, he said, "Disciples, help me to go and have our travel rescript certified."

Rising quickly, Pilgrim, Sand-monk, and 8 Rules slipped on their clothes and stood to one side to wait on their master. They said, "Let it be known to our master that this king truly believes only the Daoists and is eager to exalt the Way and to exterminate the Religious. We fear that any ill-spoken word may cause him to refuse to certify our rescript. Let us therefore accompany Master to enter the court."

Highly pleased, the Tang Monk draped the brocaded cassock on himself while Pilgrim took out the travel rescript; Awakened to Purity was told to hold the alms bowl and Aware of Ability to take up the priestly staff. The luggage and the horse were placed in the care of the monks of the Wisdom Depth Monastery. They went before the Five-Phoenix Tower and saluted the Custodian of the Yellow Gate. Having identified themselves, they declared that they were scripture pilgrims from the Great Tang in the Land of the East who wished to have their travel rescript certified and would therefore like the custodian to announce their arrival. The official of the gate went at once into court and saluted himself before the golden steps to memorialise to the king, saying, "There are four Religious monks outside who claim that they are scripture pilgrims from the Great Tang in the Land of the East. They wish to have their travel rescript certified, and they now await Your Majesty's decree before the Five-Phoenix Tower."

When the king heard this, he said, "These monks have nowhere to court death and, of all places, they have to do it here! Why didn't our constables arrest them at once and bring them here?" A Grand Preceptor before the throne stepped forward and said, "The Great Tang in the Land of the East is located in the South Jambūdvīpa Continent; it's the great nation of China, some ten thousand miles from here. As the way is infested with monsters and fiends, these monks must have considerable magic powers or they would not dare undertake this westward journey. I implore Your Majesty to invite them in and certify their rescript so that they may proceed, for the sake of the fact that they are the distant monks from China and for the sake of not destroying any goodly affinity."

The king gave his consent and summoned the Tang Monk and his followers before the Hall of Golden Chimes. After master and disciples arrived before the steps, they presented the rescript to the king. The king opened the document and was about to read it, when the Custodian of the Yellow Gate appeared to announce, "The three Preceptors of State have arrived." The king was so flustered that he put away the rescript hurriedly and left the dragon seat. After having ordered his attendants to set out some embroidered cushions, he bent his body to receive his visitors. When Tripitaka and his followers turned around to look, they saw those three great mortals swagger in, followed by a young acolyte with two tousled tails. Not daring even to lift their eyes, the two rows of officials all saluted deeply as they walked by. After they ascended the Hall of Golden Chimes, they did not even bother to salute the king.

"State Preceptors," said the king, "we've not invited you. How is it that you're pleased to visit us today?"

"We've something to tell you," said one of the old Daoists, "and that's why we're here. Those four monks down there where do they come from?"

The king said, "They were sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to fetch scriptures, and they presented themselves here to have their travel rescript certified." Clapping their hands together, the three Daoists burst out laughing and said, "We thought they had fled. So they are still here!" Somewhat startled, the king said, "What do you mean, Preceptors? When we first heard of their arrival, we wanted to arrest them and send them to serve you, had not our Grand Preceptor on duty intervened and presented a most reasonable memorial. Since we'd regard for the fact that they had travelled a great distance, and since we didn't wish to destroy our goodly affinity with China, we summoned them in here to verify their rescript. We didn't expect you to raise any question about them. Could it be that they have offended you in some way?"

"Your Majesty wouldn't know about this," said one of the Daoists, chuckling. "Hardly had they arrived yesterday when they slew two of our disciples outside the eastern gate. The five hundred Religious prisoners were all released and the cart was smashed to pieces. As if that weren't enough, they sneaked into our temple last night, vandalized the holy images of the Three Pure Ones, and devoured all the imperial offerings. We're fooled by them at first, thinking that the Celestial Worthies had descended to Earth. We therefore even asked them to give us some golden elixir and holy water with which we might present Your Majesty, so that you'd be blessed with eternal youth. We hardly expected that they would trick us by leaving us their urine. We found out all right, after each of us had tasted a mouthful! Just when we're about to seize them, they managed to escape. We didn't think that they would dare remain here today. As the proverb says, 'The road for fated enemies is narrow indeed!'"

When the king heard this, he became so irate that he would have had the four priests executed at once. Pressing his palms together, the Great Sage Sun cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Your Majesty, let your thunder-like wrath subside for the moment and permit this monk to present his memorial.”

“You offended the State Preceptors!” said the king. “Do you dare imply that their words might be erroneous?” Pilgrim said, “He claimed that yesterday we slaughtered two of his disciples outside the city. But who could be a witness? Even if we’re to confess to this crime, and that would be a gross injustice, only two of us need be asked to pay with our lives, and two of us should be released so that we might proceed to acquire the scriptures. He claimed further that we wrecked their cart and released their Religious prisoners. Again, there is no witness, and moreover, this is hardly a mortal offence and only one of us should be punished for this if it were true. Finally, he charged us with vandalizing the images of the Three Pure Ones and causing disturbance in their temple. This is clearly a trap they set for us.”

“How could you say that it’s a trap?” asked the king.

“We monks are from the Land of the East,” said Pilgrim, “and we’ve just arrived in this region. We can’t even tell one street from another. How could we know about the affairs of their temple, and at night no less? If we’d leave them our urine, they should have been able to arrest us right then and there. Why did they wait until this morning to accuse us? In this whole wide world, there are countless people who use false identities. How could they know for certain that we’re guilty? I beg Your Majesty to withhold your anger and make a thorough investigation.” The king, after all, had always been rather muddle-headed. When he heard this lengthy speech by Pilgrim, he became more confused than ever.

Just then, the Custodian of the Yellow Gate again came to make this announcement: “Your Majesty, there are outside the gate many village elders who await your summons.”

“For what reason?” asked the king. He ordered them brought in, and thirty or forty village elders came before the hall. “Your Majesty,” they said as they respected, “there has been no rain this year for the entire spring, and we fear that there will be a famine if it remains dry like this through summer. We’ve come especially to request that one of the Holy Dads, the Preceptors of State, pray for sweet rain that will succor the entire population.” The king said, “Let the village elders withdraw. Rain will be forthcoming.” The village elders gave thanks and left.

Then the king said, “You, priests of the Tang court, why do you think that we honour the Dao and seek to destroy Religion? It was because in years past, the monks of this dynasty attempted to pray for rain, and they could not produce even a single drop. It was our good fortune that these Preceptors of State descended from Heaven and saved us from our bitter affliction. Now all of you’ve offended the Preceptors of State no sooner than you arrived from a great distance, and you’d be condemned. We’ll pardon you for the moment however, and ask whether you dare to have a rainmaking competition with our Preceptors. If your prayers could bring us the rain to assuage the needs of the people, we’d pardon you, certify your rescript, and permit you to journey to the West. If you fail in your competition and no rain comes, all of you’ll be taken to the block and beheaded publicly.” With a laugh, Pilgrim said, “This little priest has some knowledge of prayers, too!”

When the king heard this, he at once asked for an altar to be built. Meanwhile, he also gave the command that his carriage be brought out. “We want personally to ascend the Five-Phoenix Tower to watch,” he said. Many officials followed the carriage up the tower and the king took his seat. Tripitaka Tang, followed by Pilgrim, Sand-monk, and 8 Rules, stood at attention down below while the three Daoists also accompanied the king and took their seats on the tower. In a little while, an official came riding with the report, “The altar is ready. Let one of the Dad Preceptors of State ascend it.”

Saluting with his hands folded before him, the Tiger-Strength Mortal took leave of the king and walked down the tower. “Sir,” said Pilgrim, barring his way, “where are you going?”

“To ascend the altar and pray for rain,” said the Great Mortal. “You do have a sense of self-importance,” said Pilgrim, “absolutely unwilling to defer to us monks who have come from a great distance. All right! As the proverb says, ‘Even a strong dragon is no match for a local worm!’ But if the master insists on proceeding first, then he must make a statement first before the king.”

“What statement?” asked the Great Mortal. Pilgrim said, “Both you and I are supposed to ascend the altar to pray for rain. When it comes, how could anyone tell whether it’s your rain or mine? Who could tell whose merit it is?” When the king above them heard this, he was secretly pleased and said, “The words of this little priest are quite gutsy!” When Sand-monk heard this, he said to himself, smiling, “You don’t know that his stomach’s full of gutsiness! He hasn’t shown much of it yet!”

The Great Mortal said, “There’s no need for me to make any statement. His Majesty is quite familiar with what I’m about to do.”

“He may know it,” said Pilgrim, “but I’m a monk who came from a distant region. I’ve never met you and I’m not familiar with what you’re about to do. I don’t want us to end up accusing each other later, for that wouldn’t be good business. We must settle this first before we act.”

“All right,” said the Great Mortal, “when I ascend the altar, I’ll use my ritual tablet as a sign. When I bang it loudly on the table once, wind will come; the second time, clouds will gather; the third time, there will be lightning and thunder; the fourth time, rain will come; and finally the fifth time, rain will stop and clouds will disperse.”

“Marvellous!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “I’ve never seen this before! Please go! Please go!”

With great strides, the Great Mortal walked forward, followed by Tripitaka and the rest. As they approached the altar, they saw that it was a platform about thirty feet tall. On all sides were flown banners with the names of the Twenty-Eight Constellations written on them. There was a table on top of the altar, and on the table was set an urn filled with burning incense. On both sides of the urn were two candle stands with huge, brightly lit candles. Leaning against the urn was a tablet made of gold, carved with the names of the thunder deities. Beneath the table were five huge cisterns full of clear water and afloat with willow branches. To the branches was attached a thin sheet of iron inscribed with the charms used to summon the agents of the Thunder Bureau. Five huge pillars were also set up around the table, and written on these pillars were the names of the barbarian thunder lords of Five Quarters. There were two Daoists standing on both sides of each pillar; each of the Daoists held an iron budgeon used for pounding on the pillar. There were also many Daoists drawing up documents behind the altar. Before them there were set up a brazier for burning papers and several statues, all representing the messengers of charms, the local spirits, and patron deities.

The Great Mortal without affecting the slightest degree of modesty, walked straight up to the altar and stood still. A young Daoist presented him with several charms written on yellow papers and a treasure sword. Holding the sword, the Great Mortal recited a spell and then burnt a charm on the flame of a candle. Down below several Daoists picked up a document and a statue holding a charm and had these burned also. With a bang the old Daoist high above brought down his ritual tablet on the table and at once a breeze could be felt in the air. “O dear! O dear!” muttered 8 Rules. “This Daoist is certainly quite capable! He bangs his tablet once and indeed the wind’s rising.”

“Be quiet, Brother,” said Pilgrim. “Don’t speak to me anymore. Just stand guard over Master here and let me do my business.”

Dear Great Sage! He pulled off a piece of hair and blew on it his mortal breath, saying, “Change!” It changed at once into a spurious Pilgrim, standing next to the Tang Monk. His true body rose with his primal spirit into mid-air where he shouted, “Who is in charge of the wind here?” He so startled the Old Woman of the Wind that she hugged her bag while the Second Boy of the Wind pulled tight the rope at the mouth of the bag. They stepped forward to salute Pilgrim who said, “I’m accompanying the holy monk of the Tang court to go to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. We happen to pass through the Cart Slow Kingdom and are now waging a rainmaking contest with that deviant Daoist. How could you not help old monkey and assist that Daoist instead? I’ll pardon you this time but you’d better call in the wind. If there’s just the tiniest breeze to make the whiskers of the Daoist flutter, each of you’ll receive twenty strokes of the iron rod!”

“We dare not! We dare not!” said the Old Woman of the Wind, and so, there was no sign of any wind. Unable to contain himself, 8 Rules began to holler, “You Sir, please step down! You’ve banged aloud the tablet. How is it that there’s no wind? You come down, and let us go up there.”

Holding high his tablet, the Daoist burned another charm before bringing down his tablet once more. Immediately, clouds and fog began to form in mid-air but the Great Sage Sun shouted again, “Who is spreading the clouds?”

He so startled the Cloud-Pushing Boy and the Fog-Spreading Lad that they hurriedly came forward to salute him. After Pilgrim had given his explanation as before, the Cloud Boy and the Mist Lad removed the clouds, so that *the sun came out and shone most brilliantly; the sky was cloudless for 10000 miles*. Laughing, 8 Rules said, “This master may deceive the king and befool his subjects. But he hasn’t any real abilities! Why, the tablet has sounded twice! Why is it that we don’t see any clouds forming?”

Becoming rather agitated, the Daoist loosened his hair, picked up his sword, and recited another spell as he burned a charm. Once more he brought down his tablet with a bang, and immediately the Heavenly Lord Deng arrived from the South Heaven Gate, trailed by the Squire of Thunder and the Mum of Lightning. When they saw Pilgrim in mid-air, they saluted him, and he gave his explanation as before. “What powerful summons,” he said “brought you all here so quickly?” The Heavenly Lord said, “The proper magic of Five Thunder exercised by that Daoist was not faked.<sup>2</sup> He issued the summons and burned the document that alerted the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor sent his decree to the residence of the Primordial Celestial Worthy of All-Pervading Thunderclap in the 9-fold Heaven. We in turn received his command to come here and assist with the rainmaking by providing thunder and lightning.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “just wait a moment. You can help old monkey instead.”

There was, therefore, neither the sound of thunder nor the flash of lightning. In sheer desperation now, that Daoist added more incense, burned his charms, recited more spells, and struck his tablet more loudly than ever. In mid-air, the Dragon Kings of Four Oceans all arrived together, only to be met by Pilgrim who shouted, “Aguang where do you think you’re going?” Aoguang, Aoshun, Aoqin, and Aorun all went forward to salute him, and Pilgrim gave his explanation as before. He thanked the Dragon Kings moreover, saying, “I needed your help in times past but we’ve not yet reached our goal. Today, I must rely on your assistance once more to help me achieve this merit right now. That Daoist has struck his tablet four times, and it’s now old monkey’s turn to do business. But I don’t know how to burn charms, issue summons, or strike any tablet. So all of you must play along with me.”

The Heavenly Lord Deng said, “If the Great Sage gives us the order who would dare disobey? You must however, give us a sign so that we may follow your instructions in an orderly manner. Otherwise, thunder and rain may be all mixed up, and that will not be to the credit of the Great Sage.” Pilgrim said, “I’ll use my rod as the sign.”

“O Dear Dad!” cried the Squire of Thunder, horrified. “How could we take the rod?”

“I’m not going to strike you,” said Pilgrim. “All I want from you is to watch the rod. If I point it upwards once, you’ll make the wind blow.”

“We’ll make the wind blow!” snapped the Old Woman of the Wind and the Second Boy of the Wind in unison.

“When the rod points upward a second time, you’ll spread the clouds.”

“We’ll spread the clouds! We’ll spread the clouds!” cried the Cloud-Pushing Boy and the Mist-Spreading Lad.

“When I point the rod upwards for the third time, I want thunder and lightning.”

“We’ll provide the service! We’ll provide the service!” said the Squire of Thunder and the Mum of Lightning.

“When I point the rod upwards the fourth time, I want rain.”

“We obey! We obey!” said the Dragon Kings.

“And when I point the rod upwards the fifth time, I want sunshine and fair weather. Don’t make any mistake!”

After he had given all these instructions, Pilgrim dropped down from the clouds and retrieved his hair back to his body. Being of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, how could those people know the difference? Pilgrim then cried out with a loud voice, “Sir, please stop! You’ve struck aloud the tablet four times but there’s not the slightest sign of wind, cloud, thunder, or rain. You’d let me take over.”

The Daoist had no choice but to leave his place and come down the altar for Pilgrim to take his turn. Pouting, he went back to the tower to see the throne. “Let me follow him,” said Pilgrim, “and see what he has to say.” He arrived and heard the king asking the Daoist, “We’ve been listening here most eagerly for the sounds of your tablet. Four times it struck and there was neither wind nor rain.

Why is that?” The Daoist said, “Today the dragon deities are not home.” Pilgrim shouted with a loud voice, “Your Majesty, the dragon deities are home all right but the magic of your National Preceptor is not efficacious enough to bring them here. Allow us priests to summon them here for you to see.”

“Ascend the altar at once,” said the king, “and we’ll wait for the rain here.”

Having received this decree, Pilgrim dashed back to the altar and tugged at the Tang Monk, saying, “Master, please go up to the altar.”

“Disciple,” said the Tang Monk, “I don’t know how to pray for rain.”

“He’s trying to set you up,” said 8 Rules, laughing. “If there’s no rain, they’ll put you on the pyre and finish you off with a fire.”

Pilgrim said, “Though you may not know how to pray for rain, you know how to recite scriptures. Let me help you.”

The elder indeed ascended the altar and solemnly took a seat on top. With complete concentration, he recited silently the Heart *Thread*. Suddenly an official came galloping on a horse with the question, “Why’re you monks not striking the tablet and burning charms?”

Pilgrim answered in a loud voice, “No need for that! Ours is the quiet work of fervent prayers.” The official left to give this reply to the king, and we’ll mention him no further. Pilgrim took out his rod from his ear and 1 wave of it in the wind gave it a length of 12 feet and the thickness of a rice bowl when he heard that his old master had finished reciting the *Thread*. He pointed it upwards in the air; when the Old Woman of the Wind saw it, she immediately shook loose her bag as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boy of the Wind untied the rope around its mouth. The roar of the wind could be heard instantly as tiles and bricks flew up all over the city and stones and dust hurtled through the air. *Just look at it!* It was truly marvellous wind, not at all similar to any ordinary breeze. *1 saw snapped willows and cracked flowers; fallen trees and toppled woods; 9-layered halls with chipped and broken walls; a 5-Phoenix Tower of shaken pillars and beams; the red sun losing its brightness in Heaven; the yellow sand taking wings on Earth; alarmed warriors before the martial hall; frightened ministers in the letters bower; girls of 3 palaces with frowzy locks; beauties of 6 chambers with tousled hair. Tassels dropped from gold caps of marquis and earts; the prime minister’s black gauze did spread its wings. Attendants had words but they dared not speak; the Yellow Gate held papers that could not be sent. Goldfishes and jade belts stood not in rows; ivory tablets and silk gowns had broken ranks. Coloured rooms and turquoise screens were all damaged; green windows and scarlet doors were all destroyed. Tiles of*

Golden Chimes Hall flew off with bricks; carved doors of Brocade-Cloud Hall all fell apart. This violent wind's violent indeed! It blew till king, subjects, dads, sons could not meet till all streets, markets were emptied of men, and doors of 10000 homes were tightly shut. As this violent gust of wind arose, Pilgrim Sun further revealed his magic power. Giving his golden-hooped rod a twirl, he pointed it upwards a second time. 1 saw the Cloud-Pushing Boy revealed his godly power and a murky mass dropped down from Heaven; the Fog-Spreading Lad displayed his magic might and dense, soaring mists covered the Earth. The 3 markets all grew dim; the 6 avenues all turned dark. With wind clouds left the seas and Kunlun, trailing the rain. Soon they filled Heaven and Earth and blackened this world of dust. It was opaque like chaos of yore; none could see Phoenix Tower's door. As thick fog and dense clouds rolled in, Pilgrim Sun gave his golden-hooped rod another twirl and pointed it upwards a third time. 1 saw the Squire of Thunder raging, rode a fiery beast backward to descend from Heaven's pass; the Mum of Lightning irate, wielded gold snakes madly as she left the Dipper Hall. Hu-la-la cracked the thunder, shattering the Iron Fork Mountain; Xi-li-li flashed the scarlet sheets, flying out of the Eastern Ocean. Loud rumbles of chariots came on and off; like fires and fumes the grains and rice shot up. Myriad things sprouted, their spirits revived. Countless insects were from dormancy aroused. 3King and subjects both were terrified; traders and merchants were awed by the sound. Ping-ping, pang-pang, the thunder flashed and roared so ferociously that it seemed as if mountains were toppling and the earth was splitting apart. So terrified were the city's inhabitants that every house lighted incense, that every home burned paper money. "Old Deng," shouted Pilgrim. "Take care to look out for those greedy and corrupt officials, those churlish and disobedient sons. Strike down many of them for me to warn the public!" The peal of thunder grew louder than ever. Finally Pilgrim pointed to the iron rod once more. 1 saw the dragons gave order and rain filled the world, strong as Heavens' river spilling over the dikes, quick as the clouds rushing through a channel. It pattered on top of towers; splashed outside the windows. The Silver Stream ran down from Heaven and whitecaps surged through the streets. It spurted like vases upturned; gushed forth like basins poured out. With houses almost drowned in hamlets, the water rose to rural bridges' height. Truly mulberry fields became vast oceans and billows all too soon raced through the land. Dragon gods came to lend a helping hand by lifting up the Yangzi and throwing it down!

The torrential rain began in the morning and did not stop even after the noon hour. So great was the downpour that all the streets and gully of the Cart Slow Kingdom were completely flooded. The king therefore issued this decree: "The rain's enough! If we'd any more, it might damage the crops and that would have made things worse."

An official messenger below the 5-Phoenix Tower at once galloped through the rain to make this announcement: "Holy monk, we've enough rain."

When Pilgrim heard this, he pointed the golden-hooped rod upwards once more. Instantly the thunder stopped and the wind subsided, the rain ended and the clouds dispersed. The king was filled with delight, and not 1 of the various civil and military officials could refrain from marvelling, saying, "Marvellous priest! This is truly that 'for the strong, there's someone stronger still!' Even when our Preceptors of State were capable of making the rain, a fine drizzle would go on for virtually half a day before it stopped completely. How it's that the weather can turn fair the moment the priest wants it to be fair? Look, the sun comes out instantly and there's a speck of cloud nowhere!"

The king gave the command for the carriage to be returned to the palace, for he wanted to certify the travel rescript and permit the Tang Monk to pass through. Just as he was about to use his treasure seal, the three Daoists all went forward and stopped him, saying, "Your Majesty, this downpour of rain can't be regarded as the monk's merit, for it still owes its origin to the strength of the Daoist Gate." The king said, "You just claimed that the Dragon Kings were not home and that was why it didn't rain. He walked up there, exercised his quiet work of fervent prayers, and rain came down at once. How could you strive with him for credit?"

The Tiger-Strength Mortal said, "I issued my summons, burned my charms, and struck my tablets several times after I ascended the altar. Which Dragon King would dare not show up? It had to be that someone else somewhere was also requesting their service, and that was the reason that the Dragon Kings along with the officers of the other four bureaus – of wind, cloud, thunder, and lightning – did not appear at first. Once they heard my summons however, they were in a hurry to get here, and by that time it happened that I was leaving the altar already. The priest, of course, made use of the opportunity and it rained. But if you thought about the matter from the beginning, the dragons were those which I summoned here and the rain was that which we called for. How could you regard this, therefore, as their meritorious fruit?" When that dim-witted king heard these words, he became all confused again.

Pilgrim walked one step forward, and pressing his palms together he said, "Your Majesty, this trivial magic of heterodoxy is hardly to be considered anything of consequence. Let's not worry about whether it's his merit or ours. Let me tell you instead that there are in mid-air right now the Dragon Kings of the Four Oceans; because I've not dismissed them, they dare not withdraw. If that Preceptor of State could order the Dragon Kings to reveal themselves, I'd concede that this was his merit." Very pleased, the king said, "We've been on the throne for twenty-three years but we've never laid eyes on a living dragon. Both of you can exercise your magic power, regardless whether you're a monk or a Daoist. If you'd ask them to reveal themselves, it would be your merit; if you'd not, it would be your fault."

Those Daoists, of course, had no such power or authority. Even if they were to give the order, the Dragon Kings would never dare show themselves on account of the presence of the Great Sage. Thus, the Daoists said, "We can't do this. Why don't you try?"

Lifting his face toward the air, the Great Sage cried out in a loud voice: "Aoguang, where're you? All of you brothers, show your true selves!"

When those Dragon Kings heard this call, they at once revealed their original forms – four dragons dancing through clouds and mists toward the Hall of Golden Chimes. See them *soaring and transforming, encircling clouds and mists. Like white hooks the jade claws hang; bright mirrors the silver scales shine. Whiskers float like white silk, each strand's distinct; horns rise ruggedly, each prong is clear. Those craggy foreheads; brilliant round eyes. They hidden or seen, can't be fathomed; flying or soaring, cannot be described. Pray for rain and rain comes instantly; ask for fair sky and it's here at once. Only these are the true dragon forms, most potent and holy, their good aura surrounds the court profusely.* The king lighted incense in the hall and the various officials saluted down before the steps. "It's most kind of you to show us your precious forms," said the king. "Please go back and we'll say a special mass another day to thank you."

"All of you deities may now retire," said Pilgrim, "for the king's promised to thank you with a special mass on another day." The Dragon Kings returned to the oceans while the other deities all went back to Heaven. Thus this is *the true magic might, so boundless and vast; heresy's pierced by nature enlightened.*

#### 046 Heresy flaunts its strength to mock orthodoxy; Mind Monkey slays the deviates in epiphany

When the king saw Pilgrim Sun's ability to summon dragons and command sages, he immediately applied his treasure seal to the travel rescript. He was about to hand it back to the Tang Monk and permit him to take up the journey once more, when the three Daoists went forward and saluted themselves before the steps of the Hall of Golden Chimes. The king left his dragon throne hurriedly and tried to raise them with his hands. "State Preceptors," he said, "why do you three go through such a great ceremony with us today?"

"Your Majesty," said the Daoists, "we've been upholding your reign and providing security for your people here for these two decades. Today this priest's made use of some paltry tricks of magic, robbed us of all our credit, and ruined our reputation. Just because of a rainstorm, Your Majesty's pardoned even their crime of murder. Aren't we being treated lightly? Let Your Majesty withhold their rescript for the moment and allow us brothers to wage another contest with them. We'll see what happens then."

That king was in truth a confused man: he would side with the east when they mentioned east, and with the west when they mentioned west. Indeed, putting away the travel rescript, he said, "State Preceptors, what sort of contest do you wish to wage with them?"

"A contest of meditation," said the Tiger-Strength Great Mortal.

"That's no good," said the king, "for the monk's reared in the religion of meditation. He must be well trained in such mysteries before he dares receive the decree to acquire scriptures. Why do you want to wage such a contest with him?"

"This contest," said the Great Mortal, "isn't an ordinary one for it's the name of the Epiphany of Saintliness by the Cloud Ladder."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the king.

The Great Mortal said, "We need a hundred tables, fifty of which will be made into an altar of meditation by piling one on top of the other. Each contestant must ascend to the top without using his hands or a ladder but only with the help of a cloud. We'll also agree on how many hours we'll remain immobile while sitting on the top of the altar."

When he learned that it was to be such a difficult contest, the king put the question to the pilgrims saying, "Hey, monks! Our State Preceptor would like to wage with you a contest of meditation called the Epiphany of Saintliness by the Cloud Ladder. Can any one of you do it?"

When Pilgrim heard this, he fell silent and gave no reply. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "why're you saying nothing?"

"Brother, to tell you the truth," said Pilgrim, "I'm quite capable of performing such difficult feats as kicking down the sky or overturning wells, stirring up oceans or upending rivers, carrying mountains or chasing the moon, and altering the course of stars and planets. I'm not afraid in fact of even having my head split open or cut off or stomach ripped apart or heart gouged out or any such strange manipulations. But if you ask me to sit and meditate, I'll lose the contest even before I begin! Tell mewhere'd I acquire the nature to sit still? Even if you're to chain me to an iron pillar, I'd still try to climb up and down. I can never manage to sit still."

"But I know how to sit and meditate," the Tang Monk blurted out suddenly.

"Marvellous! Just marvellous!" said Pilgrim, highly pleased. "How long can you do this?"

"I met some lofty Chan masters when I was young," said Tripitaka, "who expounded to me the absolutely crucial foundation of quiescence and concentration in order to preserve my spirit. Shut up alone in the so-called Life-and-Death Meditative Confinement, I'd managed to sit still for two or three years at least."

"If you do that, Master," said Pilgrim, "we'll not need to go acquire scriptures! At most, I don't think it will be necessary for you to sit for more than three hours here before you'll be able to come down."

"But Disciple," said Tripitaka, "I can't get up there."

"You step forward and accept the challenge," said Pilgrim. "I'll send you up there." Indeed, the elder pressed his palms together before his chest and said, "This humble priest knows how to sit in meditation." The king at once gave the order for the altars to be built. Truly, a nation has the strength to topple mountains! In less than half an hour, two altars were built on the left and right of the Hall of Golden Chimes.

Coming down from the hall, the Tiger-Strength Great Mortal went to the middle of the courtyard. He leaped into the air and at once a mat of clouds formed under his feet and took him up to the altar to the west where he sat down. Pilgrim meanwhile pulled off one strand of his hair and caused it to change into a spurious form of himself, standing down below to accompany 8 Rules and Sand-monk. He himself changed into an auspicious cloud of five colours to carry the Tang Monk into the air and lift him to sit on the altar to the east. He then changed himself into a tiny mole cricket and flew to alight on 8 Rules' ear to whisper to him, "Brother, look up and watch Master with care. Don't speak to the substitute of old monkey!" Laughing, Idiot said, "I know! I know!"

The Deer-Strength Great Mortal sitting on the embroidered cushion in the hall where he watched the 2 contestants for a long time and found them quite equally matched. This Daoist decided to give his elder brother some help: pulling a stubby piece of hair from the back of his head, he rolled it with his fingers into a tiny ball and filliped it onto the head of the Tang Monk. The piece of hair changed into a huge bedbug and began to bite the elder. At first, the elder felt an itch, after which it changed to pain. Now, one of the rules in meditation is that one cannot move one's hands; when one does, it is an immediate admission of defeat. As the elder found the itch and pain to be quite unbearable, he sought to find relief by wriggling his head against the collar of his robe. "Oh dear!" said 8 Rules.

"Master is going to have a fit!"

"No," said Sand-monk, "he might be having a headache."

Hearing this, Pilgrim said, "My master's an honest gentleman. If he said he knew how to practice meditation, he'd be able to do it. A gentleman does not lie! Stop speculating, the two of you and let me go up to take a look." Dear Pilgrim! He buzzed up there and alighted on the head of the Tang Monk where he discovered a bedbug about the size of a bean biting the elder. Hurriedly, he removed it with his hand, and then he gave his master a few gentle scratches. His itch and pain relieved, the elder once more sat motionless on the altar. "The bald head of a priest," thought Pilgrim to himself, "can't even hold a louse! How'd a bedbug get into it? I suppose it must be a stunt of that Daoist trying to harm my master. Ha! Ha! Since they've not quite reached a decision yet in this contest, let old monkey give him a taste of his own tricks!"

Flying up into the air until he reached a height beyond the roof of the palace, he shook his body and changed at once into a centipede at least seven inches in length. It dropped down from the sky and landed on the Daoist's upper lip before his nostrils where it gave him a terrific bite. Unable to sit still any longer, the Daoist fell backwards from the altar head over heels and almost lost his life. He was fortunate enough to have all the officials rush forward to pull him up. The horrified king at once asked the Grand Preceptor before the Throne to help him go to the Pavilion of Cultural Florescence to be washed and combed. Pilgrim, meanwhile, changed himself again into the auspicious cloud to carry his master down to the courtyard before the steps where he was declared the winner. The king wanted to let them go but the Deer-Strength Great Mortal again said to him, "Your Majesty, my elder brother's been suffering from a suppressed chill; when he goes up to a high place, the cold wind he's exposed to will bring on his old sickness. That was why the monk's able to gain the upper hand. Let me now wage with them a contest of guessing what's behind the boards."

"What do you mean by that?" asked the king.

Deer-Strength said, "This humble Daoist's the ability to gain knowledge of things even if they're placed behind boards. Let's see if those monks are able to do the same. If they'd outguess me, let them go; but if not, then let them be punished according to Your Majesty's wishes so that our fraternal distress may be avenged and services to the kingdom for these two decades may remain untainted."

Truly that king is exceedingly confused! Swayed by such fraudulent words, he at once gave the order for a red lacquered chest to be brought to the inner palace. The queen was asked to place a treasure in the chest before it was carried out again and set before the white-jade steps. The king said to the monks and the Daoists, “Let both sides wage your contest now and see who can guess the treasure inside the chest.”

“Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “how could we know what’s in the chest?”

Pilgrim changed again into a mole cricket and flew up to the head of the Tang Monk. “Relax, Master,” he said, “let me go take a look.” Dear Great Sage! Unnoticed by anyone, he flew up to the chest and found a crack at the base, through which he crept inside. On a red lacquered tray he found a set of palace robes: they were the empire blouse and cosmic skirt. Quickly he picked them up and shook them loose; then he bit open the tip of his tongue and spat a mouthful of blood onto the garments, crying, “Change!” They changed instantly into a torn and worn-out cassock; before he left however, he soaked it with his bubbly and stinking urine. After crawling out again through the crack, he flew back to a light on the Tang Monk’s ear and said, “Master, you may guess that it is a torn and worn-out cassock.”

“He said that it was some kind of treasure,” said Tripitaka. “How could such a thing be a treasure?”

“Never mind,” said Pilgrim, “for what’s important is that you guess correctly.”

As the Tang Monk took a step forward to announce what he guessed was in the chest, the Deer-Strength Great Mortal said, “I’ll guess first. The chest contains an empire blouse and a cosmic skirt.”

“No! No!” cried the Tang Monk. “There’s only a torn and worn-out cassock in the chest.”

“How dare he?” said the king. “This priest thinks that there is no treasure in our kingdom. What’s this worn-out cassock that he speaks of? Seize him!” The two rows of palace guards immediately wanted to raise their hands, and the Tang Monk became so terrified that he pressed his palms together and shouted, “Your Majesty, please pardon this humble priest for the moment. Open the chest; if it were indeed a treasure, this humble priest would accept his punishment. But if it were not, wouldn’t you’ve wrongly accused me?” The king had the chest opened, and when the attendant to the throne lifted out the lacquered tray, sitting on it was indeed one torn and worn-out cassock! “Who put this thing here?” cried the king, highly incensed, and from behind the dragon seat the queen of the three palaces came forward. “My lord,” she said, “It’s I who personally placed the empire blouse and the cosmic skirt inside the chest. How could they change into something like this?”

“Let my royal wife retire,” said the king, “for we’re well aware of the fact that all the things used in the palace are made of the finest silk and embroidered materials. How could there be such a shabby object?” He then said to his attendants, “Bring us the chest. We ourselves will hide something in it and try again.”

The king went to his imperial garden in the rear and picked from his orchard a huge peach, about the size of a rice bowl that he placed in the chest. The chest was brought out and the two parties were told to guess once more. “Disciples,” said the Tang Monk, “he wants us to guess again.”

“Relax,” said Pilgrim. “Let me go and take another look.” With a buzz, he flew away and crawled inside the chest as before. Nothing could have been more agreeable to him than what he found: a peach. Changing back into his original form, he sat in the chest and ate the fruit so heartily that every morsel on both sides of the groove was picked clean. Leaving the stone behind, he changed back into the mole cricket and flew back onto the Tang Monk’s ear, saying, “Master, say that it’s a peach’s pit.”

“Disciple,” said the elder, “don’t make a fool of me! If I weren’t so quick with my mouth just now, I’d have been seized and punished. This time we must say it’s some kind of treasure. How could a peach’s pit be a treasure?”

“Have no fear,” said Pilgrim. “You’ll win, and that’s all that matters!”

Tripitaka was just about to speak when the Goat-Strength Great Mortal said, “This humble Daoist will guess first: it is a peach.”

“Not a peach,” said Tripitaka, “but a fleshless peach’s pit.”

“It’s a peach we put in ourselves,” bellowed the king. “How could it be a pit? Our third Preceptor of State has guessed correctly.”

“Your Majesty,” said Tripitaka, “please open the chest and see for yourself.” The attendant before the throne went to open the chest and lifted up the tray: it was in truth a pit, entirely without any peel or flesh. When the king saw this, he became quite frightened and said, “O State Preceptors, don’t wage any more contests with them. Let them go! The peach was picked by our own hands, and now it turns out to be a pit. Who could have eaten it? The spirits and gods must be giving them secret assistance.” When 8 Rules heard the words, he grinned sardonically to Sand-monk, saying, “Little does he realise how many years of peach eating are behind this!”

Just then, the Tiger-Strength Great Mortal walked out from the Pavilion of Cultural Florescence after he had been washed and combed. “Your Majesty,” he said as he walked up the hall, “this monk knows the magic of object removal. Give me the chest, and I’ll destroy his magic. Then we can have another contest with him.”

“What do you want to do?” asked the king. Tiger-Strength said, “His magic can remove only lifeless objects but not a human body. Put this Daoist youth in the chest, and he’ll never be able to remove him.” The youth indeed was hidden in the chest that was then brought down again from the hall to be placed before the steps. “You, monk,” said the king, “guess again what sort of treasure we’ve inside.” Tripitaka said, “Here it comes again!”

“Let me go and have another look,” said Pilgrim. With a buzz, he flew off and crawled inside where he found a Daoist lad. Marvellous Great Sage! What readiness of mind! Truly *such agility is rare in the world! Such cleverness is uncommon indeed!* Shaking his body once, he changed himself into the form of 1 of those old Daoists, whispering as he entered the chest, “Disciple.”

“Master,” said the lad, “how did you come in here?”

“With the magic of invisibility,” said Pilgrim. The lad said, “Do you’ve some instructions for me?”

“The priest saw you enter the chest,” said Pilgrim, “and if he made his guess a Daoist lad, wouldn’t we lose to him again? That’s why I came here to discuss the matter with you. Let’s shave your head, and we’ll then make the guess that you’re a monk.” The Daoist lad said, “Do whatever you want, Master, just so that we win. For if we lose to them again, not only our reputation will be ruined but the court also may no longer revere us.”

“Exactly,” said Pilgrim. “Come over here, my child. When we defeat them, I’ll reward you handsomely.” He changed his golden-hooped rod into a sharp razor, and hugging the lad, he said, “Darling, try to endure the pain for a moment. Don’t make any noise! I’ll shave your head.” In a little while, the lad’s hair was completely shorn, rolled into a ball, and stuffed into one of the corners of the chest. He put away the razor, and rubbing the lad’s bald head, he said, “My child, your head looks like a monk’s all right but your clothes don’t fit. Take them off and let me change them for you.” What the Daoist lad had on was a crane’s-down robe of spring-onion white silk, embroidered with the cloud pattern and trimmed with brocade. When he took it off, Pilgrim blew on it his mortal breath, crying, “Change!” It changed instantly into a monk shirt of brown colour that Pilgrim helped him put on. He then pulled off two pieces of hair which he changed into a wooden fish and a tap. “Disciple,” said Pilgrim, as he handed over the fish and the tap to the lad, “you must listen carefully. If you hear someone call for the Daoist youth, don’t ever leave this chest. If someone calls ‘Monk,’ then you may push open the chest door, strike up the wooden fish, and walk out reciting a Religious *Thread*. Then it’ll be complete success for us.”

“I only know,” said the lad, “how to recite the *Three Officials Scripture*, the *Northern Dipper Scripture*, or the *Woe-Dispelling Scripture*. I don’t know how to recite any Religious *Thread*.” Pilgrim said, “Can you recite the name of God?”

“You mean Infinite Light,” said the lad. “Who doesn’t know that?”

“Good enough! Good enough!” said Pilgrim. “You may recite the name of God. It’ll spare me from having to teach you anything new. Remember what I’ve told you. I’m leaving.” He changed back into a mole cricket and crawled out, after which he flew back to the ear of the Tang Monk and said, “Master, just guess it’s a monk.” Tripitaka said, “This time I know I’ll win.”

“How could you be so sure?” asked Pilgrim, and Tripitaka replied, “The *Threads* said, ‘A god, the Religion, and the Sangha are the Three Jewels.’ A monk therefore is a treasure.”

As they were thus talking among themselves, the Tiger-Strength Great Mortal said, “Your Majesty, this third time it is a Daoist youth.” He made the declaration several times but nothing happened nor did anyone make an appearance. Pressing his palms together, Tripitaka said, “It’s a monk.” With all his might, 8 Rules screamed, “It’s a monk in the chest!” All at once the youth kicked open the chest and walked out, striking the wooden fish and reciting the name of God. So delighted were the two rows of civil and military officials that they shouted bravos repeatedly; so astonished were the three Daoists that they could not utter a sound. “These priests must have the assistance from spirits and gods,” said the king. “How could a Daoist enter the chest and come out a monk? Even if he had an attendant with him, he might have been able to have his head shaved. How could he know how to take up the reciting of God’s name? O Preceptors! Please let them go!”

“Your Majesty,” said the Tiger-Strength Great Mortal, “as the proverb says, ‘The warrior has found his peer, the chess player his match.’ We might as well make use of some martial arts we learned in our youth at Zhongnan Mountain and challenge them to a greater competition.”

“What sort of martial arts did you learn?” asked the king. Tiger-Strength replied, “We three brothers all have acquired some magic abilities: cut off our heads, and we can put them back on our necks; open our chests and gouge out our hearts, and they will grow back again; inside a cauldron of boiling oil, we can take baths.” Highly startled, the king said, “These three things are all roads leading to certain death!”

“Only because we’ve such magic power,” said Tiger-Strength, “do we dare make so bold a claim. We’ll not quit until we’ve waged this contest with them.” The king said in a loud voice, “You priests from the Land of the East, our Preceptor of States are unwilling to let you go. They wish to wage one more contest with you in head cutting, stomach ripping, and going into a cauldron of boiling oil to take a bath.”

Pilgrim was still assuming the form of the mole cricket, flying back and forth to make his secret report. When he heard this, he retrieved his hair that had been changed into his substitute, and he himself changed at once back into his true form. “Lucky! Lucky!” he cried with loud guffaws. “Business has come to my door!”

“These three things,” said 8 Rules, “will certainly make you lose your life. How could you say that business has come to your door?”

“You still have no idea of my abilities!” said Pilgrim.

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you’re quite clever, quite capable in those transformations. Aren’t those skills something already? What more abilities do you’ve?”

Pilgrim said, “*Cut off my head and I still can speak, sever my arms, I still can beat you up! My legs amputated, I still can walk. My belly, ripped open, will heal again, smooth and snug as a wonton people make: a tiny pinch and it’s completely formed. To bathe in boiling oil is easier still; like warm liquid cleanse me of dirt it’ll.*”

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk heard these words, they roared with laughter. Pilgrim went forward and said, “Your Majesty, this young priest knows how to have his head cut off.”

“How did you acquire such an ability?” asked the king. “When I was practicing austerities in a monastery some years ago,” said Pilgrim, “I met a mendicant Chan master who taught me the magic of head cutting. I don’t know whether it works or not, and that’s why I want to try it out right now.”

“This priest is so young and ignorant!” said the king, chuckling. “Is head cutting something to try out? The head is, after all, the very fountain of the six kinds of *yang* energies in one’s body. If you cut it off, you’ll die.”

“That’s what we want,” said Tiger-Strength. “Only then can our feelings be relieved!” Besotted by the Daoist’s words, the foolish ruler immediately gave the decree for an execution site to be prepared. Once the command was given, three thousand imperial guards took up their positions outside the gate of the court. The king said, “Monk, go and cut off your head first.”

“I’ll go first! I’ll go first!” said Pilgrim merrily. He folded his hands before his chest and shouted, “State Preceptors, pardon my presumption for taking my turn first!” He turned swiftly and was about to dash out. The Tang Monk grabbed him, saying, “O Disciple! Be careful! Where you’re going isn’t a playground!”

“No fear!” said Pilgrim. “Take off your hands! Let me go!”

The Great Sage went straight to the execution site where he was caught hold of by the executioner and bound with ropes. He was then led to a tall mound and pinned down on top of it. At the cry “Kill,” his head came off with a swishing sound. Then the executioner gave the head a kick, and it rolled off like a watermelon to a distance of some forty paces away. No blood however, spurted from the neck of Pilgrim. Instead, a voice came from inside his stomach, crying, “Come, head!” So alarmed was the Deer-Strength Great Mortal by the sight of such ability that he at once recited a spell and gave this charge to the local spirit and patron deity: “Hold down that head. When I’ve defeated the monk, I’ll persuade the king to turn your little shrines into huge temples, your idols of clay into true bodies of gold.” The local spirit and a god had to serve him since he knew the magic of the Five Thunders. Secretly, they indeed held Pilgrim’s head down. Once more Pilgrim cried, “Come, head!” But the head stayed on the ground as if it had taken root; it would not move at all. Somewhat anxious, Pilgrim rolled his hands into fists and wrenched his body violently. The ropes all snapped and fell off; at the cry “Grow,” a head sprang up instantly from his neck. Every one of the executioners and every member of the imperial guards became terrified while the officer in charge of the execution dashed inside the court to make this report: “Your Majesty, that young priest had his head cut off but another head’s grown up.”

“Sand-monk,” said 8 Rules, giggling, “we truly had no idea that Elder Brother has this kind of talent!”

“If he knows seventy-two ways of transformation,” said Sand-monk, “he may have altogether seventy-two heads!”

Hardly had he finished speaking when Pilgrim came walking back, saying, “Master.” Exceedingly pleased, Tripitaka said, “Disciple, did it hurt?”

“Hardly,” said Pilgrim, “it’s sort of fun!”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “do you need ointment for the scar?”

“Touch me,” said Pilgrim, “and see if there’s any scar.” Idiot touched him and he was dumbfounded. “Marvellous! Marvellous!” he giggled. “It healed perfectly. You can’t feel even the slightest scar!”



As the brothers were chatting happily among themselves, they heard the king say, "Receive your rescript. We give you a complete pardon. Go away!" Pilgrim said, "We'll take the rescript all right but we want the Preceptor of State to go there and cut his head off too! He should try something new!"

"Great Preceptor of State," said the king, "the priest is not willing to pass you up. If you want to compete with him, please try not to frighten us."

Tiger-Strength had no choice but to go up to the site where he was bound and pinned to the ground by several executioners. One of them lifted the sword and cut off his head that was then kicked some thirty paces away. Blood did not spurt from his trunk either, and he, too, gave a cry, "Come, head!" Hurriedly pulling off a piece of hair, Pilgrim blew on it his mortal breath, crying, "Change!" It changed into a yellow hound that dashed into the execution site, picked up the Daoist's head with its mouth, and ran to drop it into the imperial moat. The Daoist, meanwhile, called for his head three times without success. He did not have the ability of Pilgrim, and there was no possibility that he could produce another head. All at once, bright crimson gushed out from his trunk. Alas! *Though for wind and rain he can send and call, against a right-fruit god he's no match at all.* In a moment, he fell to the dust, and those gathered about him discovered that he was actually a headless tiger with yellow fur. The officer in charge of the execution went again to memorialise. "Your Majesty," he said, "the Great Preceptor of State's head was cut off but it could not grow back again. He perished in the dust and then he became a headless tiger with yellow fur." On hearing this, the king paled with fright and stared at the remaining two Daoists with unblinking eyes. Rising from his cushion, Deer-Strength said, "My Elder Brother must have been fated to die at this particular moment. But how could he be a yellow tiger? This has to be that monk's roguery. He is using some kind of deceptive magic to change my elder brother into a beast. I'll not spare him now. I insist on having a competition of stomach ripping and heart gouging."

When the king heard this, he calmed down and said, "Little priest, our Second Preceptor of State wants to wage another contest with you."

"This little priest," said Pilgrim, "has not eaten much prepared food for a long time. The other day when we're journeying to the West, a kind patron kept asking us to eat and I stuffed myself with more pieces of steamed bread than I'd have taken. I've been having a stomach-ache since, and I fear that I may have worms. This contest, therefore, can't be more timely, for I want very much to borrow Your Majesty's knife to rip open my stomach, so that I may take out my viscera and clean out my stomach and spleen before I dare proceed to see God in the Western Heaven." When the king heard this, he gave the order, "Take him to the execution site." A throng of captains and guards came forward to pull and tug at Pilgrim who pushed them back, saying, "I don't need people to hold me. I'm going to walk there myself. There's one thing however. I don't want my hands tied, for I want to wash and clean out my viscera." The king at once gave the order, "Don't tie his hands."

With a swagger, Pilgrim walked down to the execution site. Leaning himself on a huge pillar, he untied his robe and revealed his stomach. The executioner used a rope and tied his neck to the pillar; down below, another rope strapped his two legs also to the pillar. Then he wielded a sharp dagger and ripped Pilgrim's chest downward, all the way to his lower abdomen. Pilgrim used both his hands to push open his belly, and then he took out his intestines that he examined one by one. After a long pause, he put them back inside, coil for coil exactly as before. Grasping the skins of his belly and bringing them together with his hands, he blew his magic breath on his abdomen, crying, "Grow!" At once his belly closed up completely. So astonished was the king that he presented with both his hands the rescript to Pilgrim, saying, "Holy monk, please do not delay your westward journey any further. Take your rescript and leave."

"The rescript is a small matter," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "How about asking Second Preceptor of State to go through with the cutting and ripping?"

"Don't put the blame on us," said the king to Deer-Strength. "It's you who wanted to be his opponent. Please go! Please go!"

"Relax!" said Deer-Strength. "I don't think I'll ever lose to him!"

Look at him! He even imitated the swagger of Pilgrim Sun as he headed for the execution site. There he was bound with ropes, and then his stomach was also ripped open by the dagger of the executioner. He, too, took out his guts and manipulated them with his hands. Pilgrim at once pulled off a piece of his hair on which he blew a mouthful of his divine breath crying, "Change."

It changed into a hungry hawk; spreading its wings and claws, it flew up to the Daoist and snatched him clean of his guts. Then it flew off somewhere to enjoy its catch leisurely while the Daoist was reduced to *of torn belly and empty trunk a ghost so drippy with less innards and no guts a soul most ditsy!* Kicking down the pillar, the executioner dragged the corpse over to have a closer look. *Ah!* It was actually a white-coated deer with horns. The officer in charge of the execution again ran hurriedly to make the report: "Second Preceptor of State's most unlucky! As his stomach's ripped open, his viscera were snatched away by a hungry hawk. After he perished, his original form's a white-coated deer with horns."

More and more alarmed, the king asked, "How'd he turn into a deer with horns?"

The Goat-Strength Great Mortal said, "Yes, how'd my elder brother die and turn into the form of a beast? It's to be the magic of that monk used by him to plot against us. Let me avenge the deaths of my elder brothers."

"With what magic can you triumph over him?" asked the king.

Goat-Strength replied, "I'm going to wage with him the contest of bathing in a cauldron of hot oil." The king indeed sent for a huge cauldron filled with fragrant oil and told them to begin the contest. "I thank you for your kindness," said Pilgrim, "for this young priest has not had a bath for a long time. My skin in fact has been rather dried and itchy these past two days, and I must have it scalded to take away the irritation."

The attendant before the throne indeed lighted a great fire on a huge pile of wood, and the oil in the cauldron was heated to boiling. When he was asked to step into it, Pilgrim pressed his palms together in front of him and asked, "Will it be a civil or a military bath?"

"What's the difference?" asked the king. Pilgrim said, "A civil bath means that I'll not remove my clothing. With my hands on my hips, I'll jump in and jump out again after one little roll, so swiftly in fact that the clothes are not permitted to be soiled. If there's the tiniest speck of oil on the garments, I lose. A military bath however, will require a clothes rack and a towel. I'll undress before I dive in, and I'll be permitted to play in there as I wish, including doing somersaults and cartwheels." The king said to Goat-Strength, "How do you want to compete with him? A civil or a military bath?"

"If we take the civil bath," said Goat-Strength, "I fear that his robes may have been treated so that oil will slide off him. Let's have the military bath." Stepping forward instantly, Pilgrim said, "Pardon me again for the presumption of taking my turn first." Look at him!

He took off his shirt and untied his tiger-skin kilt. With a bound, he leaped straight into the cauldron, splashing and frolicking in the boiling oil as if he were swimming in it. When 8 Rules saw this, he bit his finger and said to Sand-monk, "We truly have misjudged this ape! During those sarcastic exchanges and the banter between us all this time, I thought he was simply joking! Little did I realise that he really had such ability!" They could hardly refrain from their marvelling but when Pilgrim saw them whispering back and forth to each other, he became highly suspicious and thought to himself, "That Idiot must be laughing at me! This is what the proverb means: 'Intelligence has its work and incompetence its leisure.' Old monkey has to go through all this, and he's quite comfortable over there! Let me put some ropes on him and see whether he'll be more cautious!"

As he bathed himself, he suddenly dove toward the bottom of the cauldron with a splash. There he changed himself into a small tack and all but disappeared. The officer in charge of the proceedings went forward again to make the report: "Your Majesty, the young priest has been fried to death by the boiling oil." Delighted, the king gave the order for the bones to be fished out for him to see, and the executioner went forward to rake the oil with an iron strainer. The holes in the strainer however, were quite large whereas the tack into which Pilgrim had changed himself was very tiny, and repeatedly, it fell through the holes after it had been scooped up. The officer had no choice but to come back with this word: "The priest's body is tender and his bones are frail. He seems to have melted completely!"

The king at once shouted, "Seize those three monks!" Seeing how savage the looks of 8 Rules were, the palace guards rushed at him first and threw him to the ground, tying both of his hands behind his back. Tripitaka was so terrified that he cried out in a loud voice, "Your Majesty, please pardon this humble cleric for the moment. Since that disciple of mine embraced our faith, he has made merit repeatedly. Today his affront to the Preceptor of State has led to his death in a cauldron of oil, and this humble cleric certainly has no desire to cling to my own life. Moreover, just as the officials are ruling over the people, so are you the ruler above all, and if you as king ask me, your subject, to die, how could I dare not die? But the one who died first has already become a spirit, and this is the reason I beg you for a moment's grace. Grant me half a cup of cold water or a bowl of thin gruel; give me also three paper horses and permit me to go before the cauldron to present these offerings and to express my regard for him as a disciple. Then I'll accept whatever punishment you've for me."

On hearing this, the king said, "All right! The Chinese are a very loyal people indeed!" He asked, "The Tang Monk be given the rice gruel and paper money."

The Tang Monk requested that Sand-monk go with him below the steps while a few of the guards dragged 8 Rules by the ears up to the cauldron. Facing it, the Tang Monk offered the following invocation: "My dear disciple, Sun Wukong! *Since taking precepts at the grove of Chan, what love you showed me on our westward way. We hoped jointly to perfect the Great Dao. How could I know you'd perish this day! You lived for finding scriptures when alive; in death your mind from God mustn't stray. Your gallant soul afar should wait to rise to Thunderclap as ghost from Hades' dark sway.*"

On hearing this prayer, 8 Rules said, "Master, that's not the proper invocation. Sand-monk, hold up the rice offering for me. Let me pray!" Bound and pinned to the ground, Idiot gasped out these words: "*You brazen, disaster-courting ape! You ignorant Ban-Horse-Plague. You brazen, death-deserving ape! You deep-fried Ban-Horse-Plague! Monkey's bumped off! Horse-Plague's uprooted!*"

Pilgrim Sun was, of course, still in the bottom of the cauldron. When he heard these castigations from Idiot, he could no longer restrain himself and at once changed back into his original form. Standing up stark naked in the cauldron, he shouted, "You overstuffed coolie! Whom are you castigating?"

"Disciple," said the Tang Monk when he saw Pilgrim, "you almost frightened me to death!" Sand-monk said, "Elder Brother simply loves to play dead!" The civil and military officials all rushed up the steps to report: "Your Majesty, that priest did not die. He has emerged again from the cauldron." Fearing that he might be found guilty of making a false report to the throne, the officer in charge of execution said, "He is dead all right. But today happens to be a rather inauspicious day and the ghost of that young priest is now manifesting itself."

Maddened by what he heard, Pilgrim leaped out of the cauldron, dried himself from the oil, and threw on his clothes. Dragging that officer over, he whipped out his iron rod and one blow on the head reduced him to a meat patty. "What ghost is this who's manifesting itself?" he huffed. Those officials were so terrified that they freed 8 Rules at once and knelt on the ground, pleading, "Pardon us! Pardon us!" The king, too, wanted to leave his dragon throne but he was caught by Pilgrim who said, "Your Majesty, don't walk away. Tell your third Preceptor of State to go into the cauldron also." Trembling all over, the king said, "Third Preceptor of State, save our life. Go into the cauldron quickly so that the monk won't hit us." Goat-Strength went down the steps from the hall and took off his clothes like Pilgrim. Leaping into the cauldron of boiling oil, he began to cavort and bathe himself.

Letting go of the king, Pilgrim approached the cauldron and told the fire tenders to add more wood while he put his hand into the oil. Aha! That boiling oil felt ice cold. He thought to himself: "It was very hot when I took the bath but feel how cold it is now that he's washing in there. I know. It has to be some dragon king who is giving him protection here." Leaping into the air, he recited a spell that began with the letter *Ohm* and instantly summoned the Dragon King of the Northern Ocean to his side. "You hom-growing earthworm!" said Pilgrim to him. "You scaly lizard! How dare you assist that Daoist by coiling a cold dragon around the bottom of the cauldron? You want him to display his power and gain the upper hand on me?"

Terribly intimidated, the Dragon King stammered out his answer: "Aoshun dares not do that! Perhaps the Great Sage has no knowledge of this: this cursed beast did go through quite an austere process of self-cultivation, to the point where he was able to cast off his original shell. He has acquired the true magic of the Five Thunders while the rest of the magic powers he has are all those developed by heterodoxy, none fit to lead him to the true way of the mortals. The performance of this right now is also part of the Great Rip-off that he has learned in the Little Mao Mountain' but the magic of his two associates had already been destroyed by the Great Sage and they had to reveal their original forms. This cold dragon which he has managed to cultivate by himself may deceive worldly folks but how could it ever deceive the Great Sage? I'll arrest that cold dragon at once, and you can be certain that he will be deep-fried – bones, skins, and all!"

"Take him away," said Pilgrim, "and you'll be spared a whipping!"

Changing into a violent gust of wind, the Dragon King swooped down to the cauldron and dragged the cold dragon back to the ocean. Pilgrim dropped down from the air and stood again before the steps with Tripitaka, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk. They saw that the Daoist was bobbing up and down in the oil but his desperate efforts to get out were all to no avail. Every time he climbed up the wall of the cauldron, he would slip back down; in no time at all, his flesh dissolved, his skin was charred, and his bones left his body. "Your Majesty," another officer in charge of execution went forward to report, "the Third Preceptor of State's passed away!"

As tears streamed from his eyes, the king clutched at the imperial table before him and sobbed uncontrollably crying: "*The human form's hard, hard indeed, to get! Make no elixir when there's no true guide. You've charms and water to send for gods but not the pill to make your life abide. If perfection's undone, could Extinguishment be won? Your life's precarious, your efforts are vain. If you knew before such hardships you'd meet, why not stay safely in the mount? Abstain!*" <sup>2</sup>*truly to touch gold, to smelt lead – of what use they're? To summon wind, to beckon rain – still all is vain!*

**047**

**The holy monk's blocked at night at Heaven-Reaching River; Metal and Wood rescue little children in compassion**

The king was leaning on his dragon table, wept without ceasing until night fell, his tears gushing forth like a stream. Finally Pilgrim went up to him and shouted, "How'd you be so dim-witted? Look at the corpses of those Daoists: one happens to be that of a tiger and the other, a deer. Goat-Strength was in fact an antelope. If you don't believe me, let his bones be bailed out for you to see. How could humans have skeletons like that? These three Daoists were all mountain beasts which had become spirits, united in their efforts to come here and plot against you. When they saw that your nodal fate was still in strong ascendancy, 'they dared not harm you as yet. After two or more years when your nodal fate declines, they would have taken your life and your entire kingdom would have been theirs. It was fortunate that we came in time to exterminate these deviates and save your life. And you're still weeping? What for? Bring us our rescript at once and send us on our way." Only

when he had heard this from Pilgrim did the king return to his senses. The civil and military officials also went forward to report to him, saying, "The dead indeed turn out to be a white deer and a yellow tiger while bones in the cauldron do belong to an antelope. It is unwise not to listen to the words of the holy monk."

"In that case," said the king, "we're grateful to the holy monk. It's late already. Let the Grand Preceptor escort the holy monks back to Wisdom Depth Monastery to rest. During early court tomorrow, we'll open up the Eastern Pavilion and command the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a huge vegetarian banquet to thank them."

The priests were escorted back to the monastery. At the time of the fifth watch the following morning, the king held court for many officials. He at once issued a decree to summon the Religious monks to return to the city, and this decree was to be posted on every road and on all four gates. After also giving the order for the preparation of a huge banquet, he sent his imperial chariot to the Wisdom Depth Monastery to invite Tripitaka and followers back to the Eastern Pavilion for the feast. The monks succeeded in escaping with their lives. When they heard of the decree that was promulgated, every one of them was delighted and began to return to the city to search for the Great Sage Sun, to thank him, and to return his hairs. Meanwhile, the elder, after the banquet was over, obtained the rescript from the king who led the queen, the concubines, and two rows of civil and military officials out the gate of the court to see the priests off. As they came out, they found many monks kneeling on both sides of the road, saying, "Dad Great Sage Equal to Heaven, we're the monks who escaped with our lives on the beach. When we heard that Dad had wiped out the demons and rescued us, and when we further heard that our king had issued a decree commanding our return, we came here to present to you the hairs and to thank you for your Heavenly grace."

"How many of you came back?" asked Pilgrim, chuckling. They replied, "All five hundred. None's missing." Pilgrim shook his body once and immediately retrieved his hairs. Then he said to the king and the lay people, "These monks indeed were released by old monkey. The cart was smashed after old monkey moved it beyond the double passes and through the interlocking spinal ridge, and it was Monkey also who beat to death those two perverse Daoists. After such pestilence has been exterminated this day, you'd realise that the true way belongs to the gate of Chan. Hereafter you'd never believe foolishly in any doctrine that comes along. I hope you'll honour the unity of the Three Religions: revere the monks, revere also the Daoists, and take care to nurture the talented. I assure you your kingdom will be secure forever."

The king gave his assent and thanks repeatedly before he escorted the Tang Monk out of the city. And so, their journey had as its purpose *a diligent search for the 3 canons; a strenuous quest for the primal light*. As they proceeded, they walked by day and rested by night; they drank when they were thirsty and ate when they were hungry. Spring ended, summer waned, and soon it was again the time of autumn. One day toward evening, the Tang Monk reined in his horse and said, "Disciples where shall we find shelter for the night?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "a man who has left the family should not speak as one who remains in the family." Tripitaka said, "How would a man in the family speak? And how would a man who has left the family speak?"

"In this time of the year," said Pilgrim, "a man who remains in the family will enjoy the benefits of a warm bed and snug blankets; he has his children in his bosom and his wife next to his legs. That's how comfortably he will sleep! Now, how could we who have left the family expect to enjoy such things? We must be cloaked by the stars and wrapped by the moon; we must dine on the winds and rest by the waters. We move on if there's a road, and we stop only when we come to its end."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you know only one thing but you can't see its implications. Look how treacherous is this road we're walking on! I've such a heavy load on me that I find it difficult even to walk. Please find some place where I can have a good night's rest and regain my strength. By morning, I can face the load once more. Otherwise, I'll die of fatigue!"

"Let's move on a little further then in this moonlight," said Pilgrim, "and we can stop when we reach some place where there are houses."

Master and disciples had no choice but to follow Pilgrim forward. They did not journey long before they heard the sound of rushing water. "Finished!" said 8 Rules. "We've come to the end of the road!"

"We're blocked by a torrent of water," said Sand-monk.

The Tang Monk asked, "How could we get across?"

"Let me test it to discover how deep it is first," said 8 Rules.

Tripitaka said, "Aware of Ability, don't speak such nonsense! How could you test the depth or shallowness of water?"

"I'll find an egg-shaped pebble," said 8 Rules, "and throw it in: if it splashes and foam comes up, it's shallow; if it sinks down with a gurgling sound, then it's deep."

"Go and test it," said Pilgrim. Idiot groped on the ground and found a stone that he threw into the water; all they heard was a gurgling sound as if fishes were releasing bubbles as the stone sank down to the bottom. "Deep! Deep! Deep!" he said. "We can't cross it!"

"Though you may have discovered its depth," said the Tang Monk, "you may not know how wide it is."

"Indeed not! Indeed not!" said 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, "Let me have a look." *Dear Great Sage!* He somersaulted at once into the air and fixed his gaze on the water. He saw *the moon soaked in vast sheens of light; the sky's image drenched in the deep; a spirit branch gulping mountains; a long river feeding hundred streams; 1000 foaming layers churn; 10000 folds of mount-like waves; (no fisher-fires lit up the banks but egrets rested by the beach.) An ocean-like vast expanse with no boundaries in sight*. He dropped down quickly from the clouds to the bank of the river saying, "Master, it's very wide! Very wide! We can't get across! These fiery eyes, diamond pupils of old monkey can discern good, evil up to a thousand miles during the day, and even at night, they can cover a distance of four or five hundred miles. Just now I'd not even see the other shore. How'd I tell the width of the river?"

Horried, Tripitaka could not say a word for a long time. Then he sobbed out, "O Disciple! What'll we do?"

"Master, please don't cry," said Sand-monk. "Look over there! Isn't that a man standing by the water?"

Pilgrim said, "He'd be an angler lowering his nets, I suppose. Let me go and ask him." Holding his iron rod, he sprinted forward to have a closer look. *Ah!* It was not a man but only a stone monument, on which were written 3 large words in seal script and a row of smaller words down below. The 3 large words were:

Heaven-Reaching River

The row of smaller words read:

*A width of 800 miles that few from days of old have crossed.*

"Master," Pilgrim called out, "come and look." When Tripitaka saw the monument, tears rolled down his cheeks, saying, "O Disciple! When I left Chang'an that year, I thought that the way to the Western Heaven was quite easy. How could I know of the obstacles of demons and monsters, the long distance over mountains and waters!"

"Master," said 8 Rules, "listen for a moment. Isn't that the sound of drums and cymbals coming from somewhere? It must be that some family is feasting the monks. Let's go over there and beg for some vegetarian food and make inquiry concerning the possibility of finding a boat to take us across tomorrow."

Cocking his ears as he rode, Tripitaka indeed heard the sound of drums and cymbals. "These aren't the instruments of Daoists," he said. "It's to be some religious service conducted by us Religious. Let's go over there." Pilgrim led the horse in front and all of them proceeded toward where the poems was coming from. There was actually no road for them to walk on, only a rolling sandy beach. Presently, they saw a group of well-built houses, about four or five hundred of them altogether. They saw that these houses were *close by the hill and the roads, next to the shores and the stream. Everywhere the wooden fences were shut; the bamboo yard of each house was closed. Egrets resting on sand dunes had peaceful dreams; birds nesting on willows voiced their chilly verses. The short flutes were silent; the washing tails had no rhythm. Red smartweed twigs quaked in moonlight; yellow rush leaves battled the wind. A village dog barked through sparse field fences; an old fisher slept on his ford-moored boat where lights were low and human bustles, quiet. The bright moon seemed a mirror hung in the air, the scent of duckweed blossoms all at once was sent by the west wind from the far shore*. As Tripitaka dismounted, he saw a house at the head of a path; before the house was erected a pole with a banner flying while the inside was ablaze with lamps and candles and filled with fragrant incense. "Wukong," said Tripitaka, "what we've here's certainly better than either the fold of the mountain or the edge of the river. At least the eaves of the roof can provide some shelter from the night mists and we can rest without fears. You'd however, stay behind first and let me go up to that patron's door to make known our request. If he's willing to let us stay, I'll call for you but if he's unwilling, all of you're to let loose no mischief. You're after all quite ugly in your appearances and I fear that you may frighten them. Offending these people may mean that we'll have nowhere at all to stay."

"What you say is quite right," said Pilgrim. "Please go first, master and we'll wait for you here."

Taking off his broad-brimmed bamboo hat, the elder shook the dirt from his clerical robe and went up to the door of the house, holding the priestly staff in his hands. He found the door half-closed; not daring to enter without permission, the elder stood still and waited for a brief moment, when an old man with some beads hanging around his neck, emerged from the house, reciting the name of God as he walked. Seeing that the old man was about to shut the door however, the elder hurriedly pressed his palms together and cried out, "Old Benefactor, this humble priest salutes you." Returning his greeting, the old man said, "You're too late, monk."

"What do you mean?" said Tripitaka. "I mean that you'll not get anything because you're late," said the old man. "If you had come earlier, you'd have found that we're feasting the monks. After you've eaten your fill, you'd then be given an additional three ounces of cooked rice, a bale of white cloth, and ten strings of copper pennies. Why do you come at this hour?"

"Old Benefactor," said Tripitaka, saluting, "this humble priest is not here to be feasted."

"If you're not," said the old man, "then why have you come here?" Tripitaka said, "I'm someone sent by imperial decree of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. It was late when we arrived at your region. When we heard the sound of drums and cymbals from your house, we came to ask you for one night's lodging. We'll leave by morning."

"Monk," said the old man, waving his hand gently, "a man who has left the family should not lie. The distance between our place here and your Great Tang in the Land of the East happens to be fifty-four thousand miles. A single person like you, how could you come here all by yourself?"

"That's an exceptionally accurate observation, Old Benefactor," said Tripitaka, "but I'm not alone. I've three disciples who have opened up a path through the mountains and built bridges when we came upon the waters. It was because of their being my escorts that I'd arrive here today."

"If you've disciples," said the old man, "why haven't they come with you? Please invite them forth at once! My house has enough room for all of you." Turning around, Tripitaka said, "Disciples, come here." Now, Pilgrim was by nature rather impulsive, 8 Rules was born without manners, and Sand-monk, too, happened to be very impetuous. The moment the three of them heard their master beckoning, they rushed like a cyclone toward the house, dragging the horse and the luggage along. When the old man caught sight of them, he was so terrified that he fell on the ground, crying repeatedly, "Monsters are here! Monsters are here!" Raising him with his hands, Tripitaka said, "Don't be afraid, Benefactor. They are not monsters. They are my disciples." Trembling all over, the old man said, "Such a handsome master! Why did you take such ugly disciples?"

"Though they are not good to look at," said Tripitaka, "they are quite knowledgeable in taming tigers and subduing dragons, in seizing monsters and capturing fiends."

Not fully believing what he heard, the old man supported himself on the Tang Monk and walked slowly with him inside. Those 3 rogues dashed into the hall where they dropped their luggage and tied up the horse. There were at that time several priests in the hall reciting *Threads*. Sticking out his long horn, 8 Rules shouted at them, "Hey monks! Which *Thread* you're reciting?"

On hearing this, those monks raised their heads and all at once *they saw a visitor with long horns and huge ears, a thick frame and wide shoulders, a voice that boomed like thunder. but Pilgrim and Sand-monk were in looks even uglier. Of those priests in the hall none was not in terror. They tried to keep reciting but were stopped by their leader. They left their stones, bells, and forsook the graven gods. The lamps were all blown out and torches all smothered. They scrambled and stumbled, the doorsills falling over. Like gourds when props were down, their heads bumped 1 another. A pure, serene plot of ritual became a cause of great laughter!*

When the 3 brothers saw how those priests stumbled and fell all over, they clapped their hands and roared with laughter. More terrified than ever, those priests banged into one another as they fled for their lives and deserted the place. Tripitaka led the old man up the hall but the lights and lamps were completely out while the 3e of them were still in guffaws. "You brazen creatures!" scolded the Tang Monk. "You're so wicked! Haven't I taught you every day, admonished you every morning? The ancients said, *to be virtuous without instruction, isn't this sagacity? To be virtuous after instruction, isn't this nobility? To be virtue-less even after instruction, isn't this stupidity?* The way you've perpetrated mischief has just shown you to be people of the greatest baseness and stupidity! You barged into someone's door with no manners! You've frightened the old Benefactor and scattered the priests reciting the *Threads*, completely spoiling the good works of others. Wouldn't I be blamed for all this?"

He spoke with such vehemence that they dared not utter a word in reply, and only then did the old man become convinced that they were his disciples. He turned quickly to salute Tripitaka saying, "Venerable Dad, it doesn't matter! It doesn't matter! They're putting out the lights just now because the ceremony's almost done anyway."

"If it's over," said 8 Rules, "bring out the end-of-service feast so that we can enjoy it and sleep."

"Bring out the lights! Bring out the lights!" cried the old man. Some of the members of his household, when they heard him, began to complain to themselves, "There are enough candles already in the hall for the religious service. Why is he calling for lights?" A few houseboys came out to see for themselves and they found the hall in complete darkness. Returning hurriedly with torches and lanterns, they suddenly saw the forms of 8 Rules and Sand-monk. So terrified by the sight they were that they dropped their torches and dashed inside, slamming shut the mid-level door and shouting all the time, "There are monsters here! There are monsters here!"

Picking up one of the torches, Pilgrim relit the lamps and the candles before he pulled a chair to the middle of the hall for the Tang Monk to sit on. Then he and his brothers sat down on both sides and the old man took a seat in front of all of them. As they sett led into their seats, they heard the inner door open and another old man walked out, supporting himself on a staff. "What kind of perverse

demons are you,” he said, “that you dare enter the door of a virtuous family in the dark of night?” The old man who was seated, quickly arose and met him behind the screens, saying, “No need to clamour, Elder Brother. They are no perverse demons but *Arhats* sent to acquire scriptures by the Great Tang in the Land of the East. Though they look vicious, they are actually quite gentle.” Only then did the other old man put down his staff and salute greet all 4 of the visitors after which he also took a seat in the front of the hall. “Bring out the tea,” he cried, “and prepare us some vegetarian food.” He had to call several times before several houseboys, still trembling, emerged, though they still did not dare walk near the visitors.

Unable to contain himself, 8 Rules said, “Old man, why are your servants milling about on both sides?”

“I told them to bring out some vegetarian food to serve to the Venerable Dads,” said the old man. 8 Rules asked, “How many are there to serve us?”

“Eight of them,” said the old man.

“Which of us are they going to serve?” said 8 Rules.

“Why, all four of you!” said the old man. 8 Rules said, “That pale-faced master requires only one person to serve him; the one with the hairy face and thunder-god beak needs only two. But the one with the gloomy complexion will have to have eight persons, and, as for me, nothing less than twenty attendants will do.”

“If I understand you correctly,” said the old man, “you’re trying to tell me that you’ve a large appetite.”

“It’s passable, passable,” said 8 Rules. “Well,” said the old man, “there are plenty of people here.” Young and old, he managed to summon thirty servants to come out.

As the two old men spoke amiably with the monks, the rest of the household felt more at ease. A table was set up in the middle of the hall and the Tang Monk was asked to take the honoured seat. Three other tables were set up on both sides for the disciples while the two old men were seated at another table facing all of them. Fruits and vegetables were presented first, after which they brought out glutinous rice, plain rice, side dishes, and soup with vermicelli. After the food was laid out properly, the elder Tang lifted his chopsticks and recited the *Fast-Breaking Thread*. Idiot however, was an impulsive eater for one thing, and he was hungry for another. Without waiting for the Tang Monk to finish his recitation, he grabbed one of the red lacquered wooden bowls and hurled a whole bowl full of rice into his mouth. Every grain of it immediately vanished! One of the young attendants on the side said, “This Venerable Dad is not very smart! If you want to snatch something and hide it in your sleeve, why don’t you take some steamed buns? Why do you snatch a bowl of rice instead? Won’t it soil your clothing?”

“I didn’t put it in my sleeve,” said 8 Rules, chuckling. “I ate it!”

“You’ve hardly moved your mouth,” said the young man. “How could you’ve eaten it?”

“Only your son would lie!” said 8 Rules. “Of course I ate it! If you don’t believe me, I’ll eat some more for you to see!” The young man indeed picked up the bowl, filled it with rice once more, and handed the bowl to 8 Rules. Idiot took it, and instantly he gulped it all down with a flick of his hand. When the houseboys saw this, they cried, “O Dad! You must have a throat lined with polished bricks! It’s so level and smooth!” Before the Tang Monk had finished reciting one *Thread*, Idiot had downed five or six bowls of rice. After that, they raised their chopsticks to enjoy the other kinds of food. Without regard for whether they were fruits, rice, glutinous rice, or side dishes, Idiot simply scooped them all up with his hands and stuffed them into his mouth, calling all the time, “More rice! More rice! Where are you all disappearing to?”

“Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “please don’t eat so much! We’re already much better off than trying to endure hunger in the fold of the mountain. It’s good enough if you’re half-filled.”

“Never mind,” said 8 Rules. “As the proverb says, *the priest half-fed’s worse than dead!*”

“Take away the housewares,” said Pilgrim. “Don’t mind him!” Saluting, the two old men said, “To tell you the truth, there is no problem whatever if it is during the day, for we can easily feed over a hundred priests like our big-bellied elder here. But it’s late now. We’ve put away the leftovers, and we’ve managed to steam only one stone of glutinous rice and five barrels of plain rice together with a few tablefuls of vegetarian food. We’re about to invite a few neighbours to disperse the blessings with the priests. When all of you arrived, the priests became frightened and left, and we dared not even ask our neighbours or kin to come here. Everything that had been prepared was already presented to you. But if you’re not yet filled, we can steam some more.

“Steam some more! Steam some more!” said 8 Rules.

After they finished eating, the tables and dishes were put aside. Tripitaka stood up and saluted to the two old men to thank them for the feast. Then he asked, “Old Benefactors, what is your honoured name?” One of them said, “Our surname is Chen.” Pressing his palms together, Tripitaka said, “We share the same illustrious ancestors.”

“So the Venerable Dad also has the surname of Chen?” asked one of the old men. “Yes,” said Tripitaka, “that is the name of my secular home. May I ask what kind of religious service was held just now?”

“Why do you ask, Master?” said 8 Rules, laughing. “Can’t you guess? It has to be a service for harvest, or for peace, or for the completion of a building. Nothing more!”

“No, no,” said the old man. “Truly, what was it for then?” asked Tripitaka again. The old man replied, “It’s a preparatory mass for the dead.” Laughing so hard that he could hardly remain seated, 8 Rules said, “Grandpa, you’re not very perceptive! We’re experts in half-truths, masters of humbug! How could you hope to deceive us with that fraudulent title? You think that monks are ignorant of masses and religious services? You may hold a preparatory mass for the transference of merit, or for the presentation of a votive offering. Since when was there ever a preparatory mass for the dead? There is no one in your house who has died. How could you’ve a mass for the dead?”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he was secretly pleased and thought to himself, “This Idiot is getting smarter!” Then he said, “Old Grandpa, you must have been mistaken. What is this preparatory mass for the dead?” Instead of replying at once, the two old men saluted and said, “How did all of you turn from the main road to acquire scriptures and arrive at our place?” Pilgrim said, “We’re walking along the main road but it was barred by a torrent of water and we’d not cross it. Then we heard the sound of cymbals and drums, and that led us here to ask you for a night’s lodging.”

“When you reached the edge of the water,” said the old man, “did you see anything?”

“Only a stone monument,” said Pilgrim, “with the three-word inscription: Heaven-Reaching River. Below it, there’re the words: *a width of eight hundred miles that few have crossed from days of old*. There’s no other thing.”

“If you’d gone about a mile inland from the monument,” said one of the old men, “you’d have come upon a temple of the Great King of Numinous Power. But you didn’t see it?”

“We didn’t,” said Pilgrim. “Tell us, old Grandpa, what is this Numinous Power?”

At once the two old men began to shed tears as they said, “O Venerable Dad! That Great King’s *potent to move one place to build his shrine; numinous to bless people far and near. He sends us sweet rains from month to month and auspicious clouds from year to year.*”

Pilgrim said, “Sending sweet rains and auspicious clouds indicate good intentions but you’re so sad and dejected. Why?”

Beating their chests and stamping their feet, the old men sighed deeply and said, “O Venerable Dad! *Though favours abound there’s also spite. He’d hurt life even when he’s kind. For his love to eat virgin boys and girls, he’s no patent god of righteous mind!*”

“So he likes to devour virgin boys and girls?” asked Pilgrim.

“Yes,” said the old men.

Pilgrim said, “I suppose it’s your family’s turn now?”

“Indeed it is,” said one of the old men. “Our village here consists of over one hundred families, and it belongs to the Yuanhui County of the Cart Slow Kingdom. The name of this village of ours is the Chen Village. Every year this Great King requires the sacrifice of a virgin boy and a virgin girl in addition to the offering of various kinds of livestock like bulls and sheep. When he has devoured all of these to his satisfaction, he would bless us with wind and rain in due season. If there is no such sacrifice for him, he will inflict upon us all kinds of calamity.”

“How many esteemed sons do you’ve in your family?” asked Pilgrim. “Alas! Alas!” said the older of the two men, beating his chest. “Why mention ‘esteemed sons’? The term would only embarrass us to death! This is my brother, Chen Qing, and I’m called Chen Cheng.<sup>2</sup> He is fifty-eight and I’m sixty-three, both badly off for children. Since I’d no children even when I was fifty, friends and relatives urged me to take a concubine. I’d no choice but to do so and a girl was born later. Her name is One Load of Gold, and she is barely eight this year.”

“What an expensive name!” said 8 Rules. “Why was she given it?” The old man said, “Since I was childless for so many years, I persisted in repairing bridges and roads, in erecting temples and heaps, and in the feasting of monks. I kept a record of all I spent – a few ounces here and a few ounces there – and by the time my daughter was born, I’d spent exactly thirty pounds of gold. Thirty pounds make one load, and that was how she got her name.”

“And does he have a son?” asked Pilgrim. The old man said, “He has, indeed, a son born also of a concubine. He is only seven years old, and his name is Chen Guanbao.”<sup>3</sup> “Why such a name?” asked Pilgrim, and the old man said, “Because our family worships the Holy Dad Guan, and the child was conceived after prayers were offered to the Holy Dad. That’s why he has such a name. The joint age of my brother and me is over one hundred and twenty but we’ve only these two children to perpetuate our families. How could we ever anticipate that the turn to provide the victims would fall on us! We dare not, of course, refuse but it is difficult to give up our precious children. It was for the welfare of their souls that we established this plot of ritual in advance, and that was the reason I named it the preparatory mass for the dead.”

When Tripitaka heard these words, he could not restrain the tears from rolling down his cheeks and he said, “Truly it’s like what the proverb says: *instead of yellow plums only green plums drop. Old Heaven’s doubly harsh to a childless man!*”

Pilgrim however, smiled and said, “Let me question him a bit more. Old Grandpa, how much property do you’ve?”

The two old men said together, “Quite a bit. We’ve at least some seven hundred and fifty acres of paddy fields and over a thousand acres of dry fields. There must be some ninety pasture fields, three hundred water buffalos, some thirty horses and mules, and countless numbers of bulls, sheep, chickens, and geese. There is more grain in our warehouses than we can consume and more clothing in our houses than we can wear. Our property and our wealth, as you can see, are quite sizable.”

“If you own so much,” said Pilgrim, “it’s pathetic that you’re so stingy!”

“How did you come to that conclusion?” said one of the old men. Pilgrim said, “If you’re so well-off, how could you permit your own children to be sacrificed? Throw away fifty ounces of silver and you can buy a virgin boy; throw away another hundred ounces and you can buy a virgin girl. You need spend no more than two hundred ounces of silver for all expenses and you’ll preserve posterity for you and your family. Isn’t that much better?”

Shedding copious tears, the two old men said, “Venerable Dad! You’re not aware of the fact that the Great King is truly so powerful that he knows everything. Why, he even comes frequently to the families here.” Pilgrim said, “When he came through, did you ever discover how he looked or how tall he was?”

“We’ve never seen his form,” said the two old men. “But whenever we felt a fragrant breeze, it was a sign that the Dad Great King had arrived. Then we’d to burn hurriedly lots of incense and all of us, young and old, had to salute toward the wind. He knows everything there is to know of our families here; he can remember even the birth dates and hours of young and old. He will not consider it a treat unless he can devour children who are truly ours. Don’t speak of two or three hundred ounces of silver; even if we’re to spend several thousand ounces, we’d nowhere to purchase a boy or a girl of exactly the same appearance and age.”

“So, that’s how it is!” said Pilgrim. “All right, all right! Bring out your son and let me take a look at him.”

Chen Qing went inside at once and carried his son Guanbao out to the front hall, placing him before the lamps. The child of course was wholly unaware of the disaster that was about to descend on him. With two sleeves stuffed with preserved fruits and candies, he exercised about as he munched on the goodies. On seeing him, Pilgrim recited a spell silently and shook his body: at once he changed into a boy with the exact appearance of that child Guanbao. Now there were two boys holding hands and dancing before the lamps! The old man was so startled that he fell on his knees, causing the Tang Monk to cry out, “Venerable Dad, this is blasphemy! Blasphemy!”

The old man said, “But this Venerable Dad was just speaking to us. How did he manage to take on the appearance of my child all at once? Look, you give them a call, and both of them answer together! We’re the ones who are not worthy! Please show your true form! Please show your true form!” With a wipe of his own face Pilgrim changed back into his true form. Remaining on his knees, the old man said, “So the Venerable Dad has this kind of ability!”

“Did I look like your son?” asked Pilgrim, laughing.

“Very much! Very much!” said the old man. “You had exactly the same features, the same voice, the same clothes, and the same height!”

“You’ve not even examined me closely,” said Pilgrim. “Bring out the scale and see if I’m of the same weight as his.”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” said the old man. “I’d tell that you’re exactly of the same weight.”

“You think I’d serve as the sacrifice?” asked Pilgrim.

“It’s marvellous! Just marvellous!” said the old man. “Of course, you’d serve as the sacrifice.”

Pilgrim said, “I’ll exchange my life for your boy’s so that your family’s posterity will be preserved. I’ll present myself as a sacrifice to that Great King.” Respecting as he knelt on the ground, Chen Qing said, “If in your compassion you’re willing to present yourself as a substitute, I’ll present Dad Tang with a thousand ounces of white silver as his travel expenses to the Western Heaven.”

“And you’re not going to thank old monkey?” said Pilgrim. “If you’re a sacrificial substitute,” said the old man, “you’ll be finished.”

"What do you mean finished?" said Pilgrim. "The Great King will devour you," said the old man.

Pilgrim said, "Does he dare?"

"If he doesn't eat you," said the old man, "it will only be because you're too smelly for his taste."

"May Heaven's will be done!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "If he eats me, it'll mean that I'm to die young; if he doesn't, it's my luck. Anyway, I'll be your sacrificial substitute."

Chen Qing not only respected to thank him but also promised to give the monks an additional five hundred ounces of silver. Chen Cheng however, neither respected nor gave thanks; leaning on one of the screens, he wept profusely. Understanding his plight, Pilgrim went up to tug at him and said, "Number One, you're not promising me anything nor are you thanking me. I suppose you must feel terrible about parting with your daughter?"

Going to his knees at once, Chen Cheng said, "No, I can't part with her. I'm indebted to you, Venerable Dad, for your kindness, and it should be enough that you've saved our nephew. But this old moron has no other children except his daughter. If I'd die, she would weep bitterly, too! How could I ever part with her?"

"Then go quickly and steam five more barrels of rice," said Pilgrim. "Prepare some fine vegetarian dishes also and let that long-horn master of ours enjoy himself. Then we can ask him to change into the form of your daughter, and we two brothers will be your sacrificial substitutes. By saving the lives of your daughter and son, we'll accrue to ourselves secret merit. How about that?"

Horrified by what he heard, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, you can show off your energy as you please! But don't drag me into this venture without any regard for my life!"

"Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim, "the proverb says, 'Even chickens can eat only food they work for!' The moment we entered their house, they feted us with a huge banquet while you're complaining that you're only half-filled! How could you be unwilling to assist them in their difficulties?"

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "I don't know anything about transformation."

"What do you mean?" said Pilgrim. "You know thirty-six modes of transformation."

"Aware of Ability," cried Tripitaka, "what your elder brother has just said is certainly right, and what he has proposed is most appropriate. The proverb says, 'The saving of one life is better than the construction of a seven-tiered pagoda.' In the first place, we'd repay their great kindness to us; in the second, we'd make merit whenever possible by the performance of good works. Since there is no other thing you must attend to in this cool night, you and your brother can go and have some fun."

"Look at the way Master talks!" said 8 Rules. "I may know how to change into a mountain, a tree, a rock, a scabby elephant, a water buffalo, or a stout fellow. But it'll be rather difficult for me to change into a small young girl!"

"Don't believe him, Number One," said Pilgrim. "Bring out your precious daughter." Chen Cheng dashed inside and brought out his child, One Load of Gold. At the same time, his whole family, including his wife and his concubine, young and old, all came out to the front hall to kneel before the monks and respect, begging them to save the girl's life. The girl was wearing on her head a patterned emerald fillet with dangling pearl and precious stone pendants; she had on a coat of red silk shot with yellow, covered by a cape of mandarin green satin with chess-board patterned collar. Around her waist was tied a silk skirt with bright red flowers. She also had on a pair of gold-kneed trousers and a pair of light pink toad's-head patterned shoes made of hemp thread. And she was munching on some fruits, too. "Eight Rules," said Pilgrim, "that's the girl. Change into her form quickly so that we can be sacrificed."

"O Brother!" said 8 Rules. "She's so delicate and lovely! How could I do it?"

"Quick!" said Pilgrim. "Don't ask for a beating!" Alarmed, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, don't beat me! Let me try and see what happens!"

This Idiot recited a spell and shook his head several times, crying, "Change!" Indeed, his head took on the features of the little girl but his belly remained as big as ever so that his hulking frame bore hardly any resemblance to the girl's. "Change some more!" cried Pilgrim, laughing.

"You can beat me all you want," said 8 Rules, "but I can't change anymore. What am I to do?"

"You can't take on the head of a girl," said Pilgrim, "and the body of a priest! You'd be neither boy nor girl, and that wouldn't be good, would it? Why don't you assume the star posture and see what I can do for you?" He blew a mouthful of magic breath onto 8 Rules whose body at once took on the form of the little girl. Then Pilgrim said to the two old men, "Please take your relatives, your son and daughter inside so that we'll not be confused with them. I fear that after a while, my brother may become slothful and sneak inside, and it'll be difficult for you to tell them apart. Give your children plenty of nice fruits and candies and make certain that they don't cry. I don't want that Great King to get wind of our plans. We two will have some fun and be off."

Dear Great Sage! He gave instructions for Sand-monk to stand guard over the Tang Monk while he and 8 Rules assumed the exact forms of Chen Guanbao and One Load of Gold. After the two of them made all the preparations, Pilgrim asked, "How are we to be presented, trussed up or just bound? Steamed or chopped to pieces?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "don't pull any more tricks on me! I don't have that kind of ability!"

"No, No!" said one of the old men. "All we need are two red lacquered trays, on which we'll ask both of you to sit. The trays will be placed on top of two tables that will then be carried to the temple by some of our houseboys."

"Fine! Fine!" said Pilgrim. "Bring out the trays and let us try them." The old man took out the lacquered trays; Pilgrim and 8 Rules sat in them, after which four houseboys lifted up two tables and walked into the courtyard. Delighted, Pilgrim said, "Eight Rules, a couple of turns like this and we'll be priests who have ascended the tray-platform!"

"If they carry us inside," said 8 Rules, "and carry us out again, I'll not be afraid even if they go back and forth until tomorrow morning. But once they take us into the temple, we'll be devoured, and that's no game!"

"Just watch me," said Pilgrim. "When he seizes me and tries to eat me, you can flee."

"But how'd I know whom he will eat first?" asked 8 Rules. "If he eats the virgin boy first, I can flee, of course. But if he wants to eat the virgin girl first, what am I to do?"

"During one of the sacrifices some years ago," said the old man, "a few people courageous enough hid themselves behind the temple or beneath the offering tables. They saw that he ate the boy first before he devoured the girl."

8 Rules said, "That's my luck! That's my luck!"

As the brothers were talking, a loud din of gongs and drums could be heard outside the house, now lit up also by the light of many torches and lamps. The people of the same village came to pound at the front gate, crying, "Bring out the virgin boy and the virgin girl!" As the old men wept and wailed, the 4 houseboys lifted the tables and carried the 2 of them away.

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The demon raising a cold wind, sends a great snowfall; the monk intent on seeing God, walks on layered ice

Those worshippers from the Chen Village who carried Pilgrim and 8 Rules along with various offerings of livestock, straight to the Temple of Numinous Power. The virgin boy and girl were placed on top of the offerings. Pilgrim turned his head and saw that there were incense, flowers, and candles on the offering tables, in the middle of which there was also a tablet inscribed in gold letters with the title: "God of the Great King of Numinous Power." There was no other image of any deity. After the worshippers had set out everything properly, they knelt down and respected toward the tablet, saying in unison, "Great King Dad, in this year, this month, this day, and this hour, Chen Cheng, the one in charge of the sacrifice and the leader of all the faithful of the Chen Village, young and old, does follow our annual custom and offer to you a virgin boy by the name of Chen Guanbao and a virgin girl by the name of One Load of Gold. Bulls and sheep in the same number are presented to you also for your enjoyment. We pray that you'll grant us rain and wind in due season and a rich harvest of the five grains." After they made this invocation, they burned paper money and horses before returning to their houses. When 8 Rules saw that the people had dispersed, he said to Pilgrim, "Let's go home, too."

"Where's your home?" asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, "I want to go back to old Chen's house to sleep."

"Idiot," said Pilgrim, "you're babbling again! If you've agreed to do this for him, you've got to finish the job."

"You call me an idiot," said 8 Rules. "Aren't you the real idiot? We're supposed to have some fun with the Chens and fool with them a bit. You can't be serious that you want us sacrificed?"

"If we help someone," said Pilgrim, "we must help him to the end. We must wait until that Great King arrives and devours us before we can consider a perfect end to our efforts! If he has no sacrifice, he will send calamities to the village, and that will not be right."

As he spoke, they heard the wind howl outside. "O dear!" said 8 Rules. "When the wind blows like that, it must mean that the thing's here!"

"Shut up!" cried Pilgrim. "Let me do the talking!"

In a moment, a fiend arrived at the door of the temple. Look at the way he appears: *gold helmet and cuirass both bright and new; a treasure sash like red clouds wrapped his waist. His eyes seemed big stars blazing in the night; teeth resembled those of a heavy saw. Waves of mists did encircle both his legs and steamy fog surrounded all his frame. He walked and a cold wind stirred repeatedly; stood and baleful aura rose in tiers. He looked like the Curtain-Raising Captain or the great god of a monastery's gate.* Standing right at the doorway, the fiend asked, "Which family this year's providing the sacrifice?"

Laughing merrily, Pilgrim said, "Thank you for asking! Those in charge are Chen Cheng and Chen Qing."

Puzzled by this answer, the fiend thought to himself, "This virgin boy isn't only bold but also articulate. Usually the victims in the past couldn't even reply to the first question and they'd be frightened out of their wits at the second one. By the time I seized them with my hands, they'd already be as good as dead. How's it that this virgin boy today can still respond so intelligently?" Not bold enough to seize his prey immediately, the fiend asked once more, "What're the names of the boy and the girl?"

With a laugh, Pilgrim said, "The virgin boy's called Chen Guanbao and the virgin girl's called One Load of Gold."

"This sacrifice," said the fiend, "happens to be an annual custom. Now that you've been offered to me, I'm going to eat you."

"I daren't resist you," said Pilgrim. "Please feel free to enjoy yourself." When the fiendish creature heard this, he was even more reluctant to raise his hands. Standing there in the doorway, he shouted, "Don't you dare be impudent! In years past I'd eat the virgin boy first. But this year, I'm going to eat the virgin girl first."

"O Great King," said 8 Rules, horrified, "please follow the old way! Don't eat by breaking a usual custom!"

Without permitting further discussion, the fiend stretched out his hands to seize 8 Rules. With a bound Idiot leaped down from the offering table and changed back into his true form. Whipping out his rake, he brought it down hard on the hands of the fiend. The fiend retreated hurriedly and tried to flee but not before the blow of 8 Rules sent something to the ground with a clang. "I've punctured his armour!" shouted 8 Rules. As he changed back into his true form also, Pilgrim stepped forward to have a look and found that there were two fish scales about the size of ice dishes. "Chase him!" he yelled, and the two of them leaped into the air. Since that creature thought he was coming to a feast, he brought no weapon along. With bare hands he stood on the edge of the clouds and asked, "Monks where did you come from? How dare you come to oppress me here, rob me of my offerings, and ruin my name?"

"So, you're an ignorant, brazen creature!" said Pilgrim. "We're disciples of the holy monk Tripitaka from the Great Tang in the Land of the East who was sent by royal decree to go to the Western Heaven for scriptures. When we stayed with the Chen family last night, we heard that there was a perverse demon who falsely assumed the title of Numinous Power. Every year he demands a virgin boy and a virgin girl as sacrifice. In compassion we wanted to save lives and arrest you, you lawless creature. Confess at once. How many years have you called yourself Great King of this place, and how many boys and girls have you devoured? Give us a detailed account and we may spare your life."

When that fiend heard these words, he turned and fled immediately. 8 Rules tried to strike at him again with the muck-rake but did not succeed for the fiend changed into a violent gust of wind that faded into the Heaven-Reaching River. "No need to chase him anymore," said Pilgrim. "This fiend has to be a creature of the river. Let's wait till tomorrow before we try to catch him and ask him to take Master across the river." 8 Rules agreed and both of them returned to the temple and hauled all the offerings and livestock, including the tables on which they were laden, back to the Chen house. At that time, the elder, Sand-monk, and the Chen brothers were all waiting for some news of them, when suddenly, they saw the two disciples dumping the sacrificial animals and offerings in the courtyard.

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, going forward to meet them, "how did the sacrifice go?"

Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how they revealed their names and how the fiend disappeared into the river. The two old men were most pleased, and they at once gave the order for rooms to be made ready and bedding laid out for master and disciples to rest. The fiend escaped with his life and went back to his water palace. After he sat down, he fell completely silent for such a long time that his watery kinsfolk, young and old, all gathered about him to ask, "Great King, you're usually quite happy when you come home after the sacrifice. Why is it that you seem so annoyed this year?"

"After I've satisfied myself in past years," said the fiend, "I usually managed to bring some leftovers for you to enjoy. Today however, not even I myself got anything to eat. I was so unlucky that I ran into an adversary and almost lost my life."

"Which adversary was that, Great King?" they asked.

The fiend said, "A disciple of a holy monk of the Great Tang in the Land of the East who was on his way to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven. He took on the form of a virgin girl while another disciple became the boy, both sitting in the temple. When they changed back into their original forms, I was nearly killed by the two of them. I've long heard that Tripitaka Tang happened to be

a good man who had been practicing self-cultivation for ten disciples. To eat even one piece of his flesh would prolong one's life indefinitely but I didn't realise that he had such disciples under him. Not only has my reputation been ruined by them but also the offerings due me were taken away. I'd like very much to catch hold of that Tang Monk but I fear that I may be unable to."

From among the watery kinsfolk stepped a stripe-coated perch-mum who wriggled and saluted toward the fiend, saying with a smile, "Great King, if you want to catch the Tang Monk, it isn't difficult at all. But I wonder if you'd be willing to reward me with some juice and meat once you catch hold of him."

"If you'd devise a plan and succeed in capturing the Tang Monk," said the fiend, "I'd become your bond-brother. We two shall share the same table to feast on him." After thanking him, the perch-mum said, "I've known for a long time that the Great King possesses the magic to summon winds and rains and to stir up seas and rivers. May I ask whether you're able to cause snow to descend?"

"Of course," said the fiend. She asked again, "How about making ice and causing things to freeze over?" The fiend said, "Certainly."

"In that case," said the perch-mum, clapping her hands and laughing, "it's most easy! It's most easy!"

"Tell me what it is that's most easy," said the fiend.

The perch-mum said, "When it is about the hour of the third watch this night, the Great King should exercise his power without any further delay. Call up a cold wind and send down a great snowfall so that the entire Heaven-Reaching River will be solidly frozen. Those of us capable of transformation will assume human forms: carrying luggage, holding umbrellas, and pushing carts, we'll follow the direction of the main road to the West and walk continuously on the ice on top of the river. That Tang Monk must be rather impatient to get to the scriptures, and when he sees people walking about like that, he too will want to cross the river by walking on the ice. The Great King can sit quietly at the heart of the river; as soon as you hear the sound of their footsteps, crack open the ice so that he and his disciples will fall into the water. All of them will be captured then." When that fiend heard these words, he was exceedingly pleased. "Marvellous! Marvellous!" he cried, and he left his water residence at once to rise into the air. There he began to raise up a cold wind to bring snow and to cause everything to freeze up. The Tang elder and his disciples, the 4 of them sleeping in the Chen household. Just before dawn, all of them began to feel the chill even inside their blankets and their pillows turning cold. Sneezing and shivering, 8 Rules could no longer sleep, and he called out, "Elder Brother, it's very cold!"

"Idiot, why don't you grow up!" said Pilgrim. "Those who have left the family cannot be touched by heat or cold. How could you be afraid of the cold?"

Tripitaka said, "Disciple, it is indeed cold. Look! Even the heavy quilts provide no warmth and hands in sleeves feel like ice. Presently frost buds dangle from withered leaves and icy bells form on the hoary pines. The ground cracks for the severe cold; the pond's level as the water's frozen. No old fisher is seen on any boat, nor a monk at the mountain temple. Wood's scarce and the woodman's sad; charcoals added and the noble's glad. The soldier's beard is like iron; the poet's brush is all hardened. A leather coat still seems too thin; a fur robe feels even too light. On straw mats old priests turn stiff; by paper screens no traveller can sleep. Though brocade covers are heavy, your whole body shivers and shakes!"

Neither master nor disciples could sleep any longer; they scrambled up, and after putting on their clothes they opened the door to look outside. Ah! It was completely white for it was snowing. "No wonder you're complaining of the cold," said Pilgrim. "It's snowing heavily!" The 4 of them stared at it. Marvellous snow!

See dark clouds densely formed – grey fog thickly gathered – dark clouds densely formed as a frigid wind howls throughout the sky; grey fog densely gathered as a great snowfall covers the earth. Truly it is like a flower that blooms 6 times, each petal a precious jasper; or 1000-tree forest, each plant bedecked with jade. In a moment: piles of flour! In an instant: heaps of salt! The white parrot has lost its essence; the frosty crane can't boast of its cost. You add to all rivers of Wu and Chu or press down plum blossoms of the southeast. Now it seems like vanquished jade dragons, some 3000000 strong – indeed like torn scales and ripped armour flying through the air. Where can one find Dong-Guo's shoes, <sup>1</sup>Yuan An's resting place, <sup>2</sup>or the glow by which Sun Kang studied? <sup>3</sup>Nor can one see Ziyu's boat, <sup>4</sup>Wang Gong's robe, <sup>5</sup>or blankets that fed Su Wu. <sup>6</sup>All you've are some village huts of silver bricks and a country side kneaded out of jade. Marvellous snow – willow fleeces overspreading bridges; pear blossoms coating houses. Willow fleeces overspreading bridges as a fisher hangs up his coir-coat by the bridge; pear blossoms coating houses as wild codgers burn tree roots in houses. The guests find it hard to buy juice; the old servant cannot find the plums. Flitting and fluttering like butterfly wings; drifting and soaring like goose down; churning and rolling it follows the wind; in heaps and mounds it hides the roads. In waves the chilly night pierces the screens; sougling, the cold air penetrates the drapes. A good year's fine omens drop from the sky to wish humans in their affairs success. That snow came down fluttering, like flying threads of silk and finely cut chips of jade. After master and disciples gazed at it for a while, admiring its beauty, they saw the elder Chen approaching as two houseboys swept open a path. Two more brought along hot water for them to wash their faces after which others presented hot tea and milk cakes. Then they carried charcoal fires into the parlour and invited master and disciples to sit inside. "Old Benefactor," asked the elder, "may I inquire whether the seasons of your region are divided into spring, summer, autumn, and winter?"

With a smile, the elder Chen said, "Though ours is a rather out-of-the-way region, only our people and customs are different from those of a noble nation. But all the grains and livestock share the benefits of the same Heaven and the same sun. How'd the four seasons be lacking?"

"If so," said Tripitaka, "how is it that we've such a great snowfall at this time of the year and such a terrible cold?"

The elder Chen said, "Though this is only the seventh month, we just passed White Dew<sup>7</sup> yesterday, and that means that we're approaching the eighth month. In this place of ours, we've frost and snow during the eighth month."

"That's quite different from our Land of the East," said Tripitaka, "for we never have snow back there until winter actually arrives."

As they conversed, the servants came forward once more to set the tables for them to dine on rice gruel. After the meal, the snow fell even more heavily, and soon it was two feet deep on the ground. Growing more and more anxious, Tripitaka began to weep. "Venerable Dad, please do not worry," said the elder Chen. "Please don't let the deep snow bother you. We've stored up in our house a considerable amount of food, and, I dare say, sufficient to feed all of you for quite a long time." Tripitaka said, "You don't understand my sorrow, Old Benefactor. In that past year when I was entrusted with the decree to acquire scriptures, His Majesty personally escorted me outside the capital. With his own hand holding the goblet to toast me, the Tang emperor asked me, 'When can you return?' Not having any idea of the dangers of mountains and waters, this humble priest replied rather casually, 'After three years I'll be able to return to our nation with the scriptures.' Since we parted, it has been seven or eight years, and I've yet to see the face of God. I've great fear that I might have exceeded the imperial limit, and I also am troubled by the viciousness of demons and monsters. Today it is my good fortune to live in your great mansion. After the small service rendered you by my foolish disciples last night, I'd hopes that I'd ask you for a boat to cross the river. Little did I expect that Heaven would send down this great snowfall to block and cover all the roads. Now I wonder when I'd attain my goal and be able to return home."

"Relax, Venerable Dad," said the elder Chen, "for after all, many days of your journey have passed already. It does not matter if you spend a few more days here. When the weather clears and the ice melts, this old moron will see to it that you cross the river, even if I've to exhaust my wealth to do it."

Just then, a houseboy came to invite them to breakfast. After they finished that in the front hall, they hardly had time to converse when lunch was served also. Troubled by the sight of the elaborately prepared meal, Tripitaka said in great earnestness, "If you're kind enough to take us in, you must treat us as ordinary members of the family."

"Venerable Dad," said elder Chen, "we're deeply indebted to you for saving our children's lives. Even if we're to feast you every day, we'd never repay you sufficiently."

Thereafter the snow stopped, and people soon began to come and go once more. When the elder Chen saw how unhappy Tripitaka appeared to be, he asked that the garden be swept out. After a huge brazier with fire was sent for, he invited the whole party to spend some time in a snow cave. "This old fellow doesn't quite use his head!" said 8 Rules, laughing. "One can admire the garden in the second or the third month during the time of spring. But after such a big snowfall, and it's so cold now, what's there for us to admire?"

Pilgrim said, "Idiot, you're ignorant! The scenery of snow quite naturally has a mysterious calm, something which not only we can enjoy but which also can console our master."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said the elder Chen. Following his beckoning, they went to the garden and they saw a scenery of late autumn when prospects of La<sup>8</sup> appeared. Jade-like buds formed on hoary pines; silver blooms hung on lifeless willows. Jade-moss beneath the steps heaped up powder; bamboos before the window sprouted jasper roots. On artificial mountains – in domestic fish ponds – on artful rockeries pointed peaks were ranged like shoots of jade; in garden fish ponds the clear, running water became ice trays. By the banks the colour of hibiscus faded and their tender twigs all drooped near the ridge. Begonia plants were completely crushed; winter-plum trees brought forth new branches. The peony, the pomegranate, and the cassia arbours – every arbour was piled high with goose down; the place of enjoyment, entertainment, and amusement – each place was covered with butterfly wings. 2 fences of chrysanthemum: white jade framed in gold; a few maple trees: lovely red lined with white. Since countless courtyards were too cold to reach, you might admire the snow cave chilly as ice. Inside sat a beast-face brazier with elephant legs in which a hot charcoal fire had just begun. All around were some lacquered armchairs draped with tiger skins by the paper windows set so warm and soft. Inside the cave, there were hung on walls several old paintings by famous hands, themes of which all had to do with 7 worthies going through the pass, <sup>9</sup>a cold river's lonely fisher, <sup>10</sup>the scenes of snow-bound mountain plateaus; Su Wu feeding on his blanket, breaking a plum-twig for the mailman, <sup>11</sup>and frigid art wrought by trees and plants of jade. You can't begin to describe the house by the waters where fishes are easily bought or how scarce is juice when snow buries the roads. Truly this is a place most worthy to linger in. Think of it and you needn't visit Penghu. <sup>12</sup>After they had admired the scenery for a long while, they sat down in the snow cave and chatted with some of the aged neighbours on the matter of acquiring scriptures. When they finished drinking some fragrant tea, the elder Chen asked again, "Would the several Venerable Dads take some juice?"

"This humble cleric does not drink," said Tripitaka, "but my disciples may drink a few cups of vegetarian juice."

Delighted, the elder Chen at once gave the order: "Bring fruits and vegetables, and warm the juice. We'd like to help our guests ward off the chill."

The houseboys and servants brought forth tables and small braziers for heating the juice. The pilgrims and the neighbours each drank a few cups before the utensils were taken away. Soon it was dusk, and they were taken back to the front hall again for dinner. Just then, someone walking on the street was heard saying, "What chilly weather! Even the Heaven-Reaching River's frozen!"

On hearing this, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, if the river is frozen, what we'll do?"

"This sudden cold," said the elder Chen, "must have frozen only the shallow parts of the river near the bank." But the man walking on the street was saying, "All eight hundred miles across the river are so solidly frozen that its surface is smooth like a mirror. Even people are walking on it." When Tripitaka heard that there were people walking on the river, he immediately wanted to go and look. "Please be patient, Venerable Dad," said the elder Chen, "for it's getting late now. We'll go tomorrow."

They took leave of the neighbours, and after dinner, they rested in the parlours as they had the night before. When they arose the next morning, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, last night's even colder. The river, I suppose, must be solidly frozen."

Facing the door, Tripitaka knelt down and saluted toward Heaven, saying, "All you great Guardians of the Faith, your disciple's with complete sincerity resolved to journey to the West to see God. Throughout the bitter experience of traversing mountains and streams, I've never once complained. Having reached this place, I thank Heaven for providing assistance by freezing the river. Your disciples therefore wish to offer you our thanksgiving first. After we've acquired the scriptures, we'll inform the Tang emperor so that he may repay this favour of yours with all due reverence." After he finished praying, he ordered Awakened to Purity immediately to saddle the horse so that they could walk on the ice to cross the river. "Please be patient," said the elder Chen again. "Wait for a few days until the snow and ice melt away. This old moron will prepare a boat to take you across."

"I don't think we'd settle on staying or leaving," said Sand-monk, "for what we hear isn't as reliable as what we see. Let me saddle the horse but Master should go personally to the river to have a look."

"You're right," said the elder Chen. "Little ones, go and saddle six horses at once. But don't saddle Dad Tang's horse yet."

With 6 houseboys following, all of them went to the bank of the river to look. Truly there were snow piles rising up like hills as sunlight broke up the clouds of dawn. The southern border froze to turn barren all peaks; ice formed to make lakes and rivers flat and smooth. The wind was cold and biting; the ground was hard and slippery. Pond fishes cuddled dense weeds; wild birds hugged dead branches. Travellers abroad all lost their fingers; the river boatman's teeth madly chattered. Snake bellies split; bird feet snapped. Truly the icebergs rose a thousand feet tall. Cold silver floated in countless ravines; the whole river seemed one cold piece of jade. The East might think that they produced silkworms but the North in truth had their caves of rats. Here Wang Xiang lay; <sup>13</sup>here Guangwu crossed. <sup>14</sup>In one night even the river bottom all hardened! The winding stream formed jagged layers; the deep river turned frozen blocks. Not a ripple throughout the water's width, it seemed a road on land, just bright and smooth. When Tripitaka and the others came up to the river's edge, they stopped the horses to look, and true enough, there were people walking on to the ice from the main road. "Benefactor," said Tripitaka, "where are those people going on the ice?" The elder Chen said, "On the far side of the river is the Western Kingdom of Women, and these people must be traders. Things worth a hundred pennies on our side can fetch a hundred times more over there, and their things worth a hundred pennies can similarly fetch a handsome price over here. In view of such heavy profits, it is understandable that people want to make this journey without regard for life or death. Usually, five or seven people, and the number may even swell to more than ten, will crowd into a boat to cross the river. When they see that the river is frozen now, they are risking everything to try to cross it on foot."

"Profit and fame," said Tripitaka, "are regarded as most important in the affairs of the world; for profit, men would give up their own lives. But the fact that this disciple strives so hard to fulfil the imperial decree may also be his quest for fame. Am I so different really from those people?" He turned around and said, "Wukong, go quickly back to our Benefactor's home and pack. Saddle up the horse, too. Let's make use of the ice and leave for the West at once."

Smiling broadly, Pilgrim obeyed. "O Master," said Sand-monk, "the proverb says, 'In a thousand days, you only eat a thousand pecks of rice.' You're already indebted to the hospitality of Mr. Chen. Why not stay a few more days and wait until the weather turns warmer, when we can cross with a boat? Otherwise, I fear that all this hurry may cause us to make mistakes."

"Awakened to Purity," said Tripitaka, "how could you be so unthinking? If this were during the second month of the year, one might well expect the weather to warm up day by day and the snow to melt eventually. But this is after all the eighth month, and it will grow colder and colder from now on. How could you expect the ice to break so readily? If we're to wait, wouldn't our trip be delayed, perhaps even up to half a year?"



Leaping down from the horse, 8 Rules said, “Stop arguing, all of you and let Old bull test it to see what the thickness of the ice’s.”

“Idiot,” said Pilgrim, “you threw a stone the other night and succeeded in testing the depth of the water. But the ice now is solid and heavy. How could you test it?”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you don’t realise that I can give the ice a blow with my rake. If it breaks open, it will be too thin for us to walk on but if it does not, it will be thick enough. There’s no reason for us not to want to walk on it.”

“Yes,” said Tripitaka, “what you said is quite reasonable.” Hitching up his robe and walking forward in great strides, Idiot went to the edge of the river. He raised the muckrake high with both hands and brought it down with all his might. A loud thud could be heard and nine white marks were left on the ice while Idiot’s hands were shortly numbed by the impact. “You can walk on it! You can walk on it!” said he, laughing. “Even the bottom is solid!”

When Tripitaka heard this, he was very pleased. He went back hurriedly to the Chen household and all he could say was that they had to leave at once. When those two old men found that all their earnest pleas for him to remain fell only on deaf ears, they had no alternative but to prepare some such dried food as baked biscuits and breads to give to the pilgrims. As the whole family came out to respect to them, the old men also brought out a tray of gold and silver. Going to their knees, they said, “We thank you again, Venerable Dads, for saving our children. Please take this, just for a meal on your way.” Shaking his head and waving his hand, Tripitaka refused to accept it, saying, “This humble monk is a person who has left the family. I’ve no need of money. Even if I were to keep it, I’d not dare use it on our way, for begging is our proper means of livelihood. It is more than enough for us to take the dried goods.” The two old men pleaded with him repeatedly; so Pilgrim stuck his finger into the tray and lifted up a tiny piece, approximately as heavy as four or five drams that he handed over to the Tang Monk, saying, “Master, keep it as their offering so that these two won’t be too disappointed.”

They thus said farewell and the pilgrims went to the river but when the horse stepped onto the ice, it began to slip and slide and Tripitaka was almost thrown off its back. “Master,” shouted Sand-monk, “we can’t go!”

“Stop for a moment,” said 8 Rules, “and let’s ask Mr. Chen for some straw.”

“What for?” asked Pilgrim.

8 Rules replied, “You’d not have any idea about this! The straw will be used to wrap up the hoofs of the horse, so that Master won’t fall down.”

When the elder Chen heard on the shore what 8 Rules said, he told someone to fetch the straw at once. After the Tang Monk returned to the bank and dismounted, 8 Rules wrapped all four hoofs of the horse with straw and that enabled it to step on the ice without slipping. Having taken leave of the Chen clan at the edge of the river, they proceeded for no more than 3 or 4 miles when 8 Rules handed the 9-ringed priestly staff to the Tang Monk, saying, “Master, put this across your saddle.”

“Idiot,” said Pilgrim, “don’t be so sly! You’re supposed to carry this priestly staff. Why are you asking Master to do it?”

“Since you’ve no experience in walking on ice,” said 8 Rules, “you’ll not think of this. Even the thickest of ice has holes; step on one of them and you’ll plunge into the water. Without something like this held crosswise, you’ll sink rapidly while the ice above closes in like a huge wok cover. You can never crawl out again unless you’ve something like this to stop your fall.” Snickering, Pilgrim said to himself, “This Idiot must have walked on ice for years!” So, all of them followed what 8 Rules told them to do: the elder held the staff crosswise across his saddle; Pilgrim and Sand-monk each carried his iron rod and his fiend-routing treasure staff across his shoulders. 8 Rules who was poling the luggage, tied the rake sideways at his waist. Master and disciples then felt perfectly safe to proceed. They journeyed until evening; after eating some dried goods, they dared not stop at all. As the stars and the moon lighted up the ice, turning it into brilliant patches of white, they pressed forward. Indeed, the horse never stopped trotting for the entire night; master and disciples never once closed their eyes. By morning, they ate some more of their provisions and again set out toward the West. As they journeyed, a rending sound came from the bottom of the ice, so frightening the white horse that it almost fell. Greatly astonished, Tripitaka said, “O Disciples, why was there such a sound?”

“This river is so solidly frozen,” said 8 Rules, “that the ice formed from top to bottom must be grating the river bed. That may be the sound we heard.” Astonished but pleased by what he was told, Tripitaka urged his horse on and they started out once more.

We now tell you about that fiend who led various spirits from the water residence and sat waiting for a long time beneath the ice. Finally, when the sound of the horse’s hoofs became audible, he at once exercised his magic power and caused the ice to break open. The Great Holy Sun managed to leap at once into the air but his three companions and the white horse all plunged into the water. After catching hold of Tripitaka, the fiend led the spirits back to the water residence where he shouted aloud, “Where are you, perch-sister?” The old perch-mum met him at the door, saluting, and said, “Great King, I’m not worthy of it!”

“Worthy Sister, why do you say that?” said the fiend. “For ‘Even a team of horses cannot overtake the word that has left my mouth!’ I promised you that if your plan could enable me to catch the Tang Monk, I’d become your bond-brother. Today your marvellous plan did materialize, and the Tang Monk had been caught. You think I’d retract my promise?” He then gave the order, “Little ones, bring out the tables and the sharp knives. Cut up this monk: take out his heart, skin him, and debone him. Meanwhile, start the poems. I’m going to share him with my worthy Sister, so that both of us will gain longevity.”

“Great King,” said the perch-mum, “let’s not eat him yet, for I fear that his disciples may spoil our party should they come here to search for him. Wait a couple of days and if no one appears, we can then cut him up. Great King can take your honoured seat while the watery kinsfolk can surround you with reciting and dancing. His flesh will be presented to you, and you can take your time to enjoy your feast. Isn’t that much better?”

The fiend agreed; the Tang Monk was placed in a lidded stone box about 6 feet long that was then hidden in the rear of the palace. 8 Rules and Sand-monk managed to recover the luggage in the water. After they had placed it on the white horse, they opened up a path in the water and trod on the waves to rise to the surface. Pilgrim saw them from mid-air and asked at once, “Where’s Master?”

“He changed his family name to Sink,”<sup>15</sup> said 8 Rules, “and his given name is To-the-Bottom. We don’t know where to look for him. Let’s get to shore before we decide what to do.” 8 Rules happened to be the disciple of the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds who in past years was a commander of eighty thousand marines stationed in the Heavenly River. Sand-monk came from the Flowing-Sand River, and the white horse, too, was the descendant of Dragon King of the Western Ocean. That was why all of them felt so comfortable in the water. Led by the Great Sage in the air, they soon returned to the eastern shore where they brushed down the horse and stripped themselves of their wet garments. After the Great Sage dropped down from the clouds, they went together to the Chen Village. At once someone went to make this report to the 2 old men: “Four Dads went to seek the scriptures but only three have come back.”

The two brothers went quickly out the door to receive them, and they found the clothing of the pilgrims still dripping wet. “Venerable Dads,” they said, “we pleaded with you to stay and you refused. You’d stop only when you came to this! Now where’s Monk Tripitaka?”

8 Rules said, “He’s no longer named Tripitaka, for he’s changed it to Sink-to-the-Bottom.”

As tears fell, the two old men said, “How pitiful! How pitiful! We said we’d prepare a boat for him to cross the river but he absolutely refused and that cost him his life.”

“Old fellow,” said Pilgrim, “it’s no use worrying for the dead. But I’ve a hunch that Master is going to live for a long time yet. Old monkey knows! It’s to be that Great King of Numinous Power who’s planned all this and abducted him. Don’t worry now. Wash our clothes for us and dry our rescript. Make sure our white horse’s fed and let’s brothers go and find that fellow. We’ll not only rescue our master but we’ll root out also this evil for your entire village so that you’ll be able to live peacefully forever.” When the 2 brothers heard these words, they were delighted and asked for food for the pilgrims at once. After the 3 brothers had a big meal, they gave the horse and the luggage to the Chen family to look after. Each wielding his own weapon, they went straight to the river to search for their master and seize the fiend. Truly *wrong to walk on thick ice, nature is hurt. What’s perfection when great elixir leaks?*

**049**

**Tripitaka meets disaster and sinks to a water home; Guanyin reveals a fish basket to bring salvation**

The Great Sage Sun, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk took leave of the elder Chen and went to the edge of the river. “Brothers,” said Pilgrim, “the two of you must decide which one will go first into the water.”

8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, neither of us is particularly capable. You’re the one who should enter the water first.”

“To tell you the truth, Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “if this were a monster-spirit in a mountain, there would be no need for both of you to exert yourselves. But I can’t quite do business in water. If I were to go into the ocean or walk in a river, I’d have to make the water-repelling sign with my fingers, or else I’d have to change into a fish or a crab before I’d go in. Since I’d to make the sign, I’d be unable to use my iron rod properly to attack the fiend. But both of you’re used to water, and that’s why I’m asking you to go.”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “we can go in all right but we don’t know what to expect once we reach the river bottom. I think we’d all go in; you can change into some kind of creature, and I can carry you along as I open up a path in the water. Once we find the lair of the fiend, you can then go inside and scout the place. If Master is still there unharmed, we can begin our assault at once with all our might. But if it were not this fiend who used the magic, or if Master had been drowned or eaten already by him, then there would be no need for us to engage in this bitter quest. We might as well go off in another direction as quickly as possible. How about that?”

“What you said, Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “is most reasonable. Which one of you’ll carry me?”

Secretly pleased, 8 Rules thought to himself, “I don’t know how many times this ape has made a fool of me! So he doesn’t know how to handle himself in water. Let Old bull carry him and give him a taste of his tricks!” Laughing amiably, Idiot said, “Elder Brother, I’ll carry you.”

At once perceiving his intentions, Pilgrim nonetheless played along with him, saying, “All right, that’s fine. Your arms might be even a bit stronger than Awakened to Purity’s.”

Thus 8 Rules carried Pilgrim on his back. As Sand-monk divided the water to make a path, the three brothers all plunged into the Heaven-Reaching River. After journeying for over a hundred miles toward the bottom, that Idiot was about to play a trick on Pilgrim who at once pulled off a piece of hair that he changed into a spurious form of himself clinging to the back of 8 Rules. His true self was changed into a bull louse securely lodged in one of 8 Rules’ ears. As 8 Rules walked along, he suddenly and deliberately stumbled so that Pilgrim was sent flying over his head. The spurious form however, was only a transformed piece of hair; once it left the back of 8 Rules, it drifted away with the current and soon vanished. “Second Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “how would you explain this? Why didn’t you walk more carefully? It would have been all right if you had fallen in the mud. Now the jolt has sent Big Brother off to who knows where!”

8 Rules said, “That monkey can’t even stand a fall: just once and he’s melted already. Brother, don’t worry whether he’s dead or alive. You and I can go search for Master.”

“It’s no good,” said Sand-monk, “for we must have him. Though he may not feel at home in water, he is far more agile than we. If he’s not around, I’ll not go with you.”

Unable to contain himself any longer, Pilgrim inside 8 Rules’ ear shouted with a loud voice, “Awakened to Purity, old monkey’s right here!”

On hearing this, Sand-monk laughed and said, “O dear! This Idiot is as good as dead! How dared you try to play a trick on him? Now you can hear him but you can’t see him. What are you going to do?” 8 Rules became so frightened that he went with his knees in the mud and respected, saying, “Elder Brother, it’s my fault! Wait till we rescue Master, and I’ll apologise to you once more on the shore. Where are you making all this noise from? I’m scared to death! Please reveal your original form. I’ll carry you, and I’ll never dare offend you again.”

Pilgrim said, “You’re still carrying me, all right! I’ll not trick you. Let’s get going quickly!” Still muttering his apologies, Idiot scrambled up and proceeded with Sand-monk. They journeyed for another 100 miles or so when they came upon a towered building all at once, on which there was, in large letters, the inscription:

Sea-Turtle House

“This must be the residence of the monster-spirit,” said Sand-monk, “but we don’t know that for sure. How could we go up to the door to provoke battle?”

“Awakened to Purity,” said Pilgrim, “is there any water around the gate?” Sand-monk said, “No.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “the two of you go and hide on both sides of the door. Let Old monkey go and scout around.”

Dear Great Sage! Crawling free of 8 Rules’ ear, he shook his body once and changed again into a shrimp-mum with long legs. With two or three leaps, he bounded right inside the gate. As he looked around, he saw the fiend sitting up there while his watery kinsfolk stood in two rows beneath him. There was also a striped-coated perch-mum sitting by his side. They were all having a discussion on how to eat the Tang Monk. Pilgrim looked left and right with great care but he could not find his master at all. Just then he saw a large-bellied shrimp-mum come out and stand still in the western corridor. Pilgrim leaped up to her and greeted her, saying, “Mama, the Great King is discussing with the others how to eat the Tang Monk. But where *is* the Tang Monk?”

“He’s captured yesterday,” said the shrimp-mum, “after the Great King brought down the snow and created the ice. He’s now imprisoned in a stone box at the rear of the palace. If by tomorrow his disciples show up to cause no trouble, we’ll make poems and feast on him.”

After he heard this, Pilgrim chatted further with her for a while before moving toward the rear of the palace. He looked and sure enough there was a stone box somewhat like a dung-bucket that people use in a cowshed or stone coffin. Measuring it, he found it to be approximately 6 feet in length. He crawled on top of it and soon heard the pitiful sound of Tripitaka’s weeping coming from inside. Not uttering a word, Pilgrim cocked his ear to listen. Grinding his teeth in sheer frustration, the master said, “*I loathe the River Float, a life plagued by woes! How many water perils bound me at birth! I left my mum’s womb to be tossed by waves; I plumbed the deep, seeking God in the West. I met disaster at Black River before; now in this ice-break, my life will expire. I know not if my pupils can come here or if with true scriptures I can go home.*”

Pilgrim could not refrain from calling out, “Master, don’t be annoyed. The *Water-Calamity Book* says, *Earth’s the mum of the five Phases; but water’s their very source. There’s no life without earth and no growth without water.* Old monkey’s arrived!”

On hearing this, Tripitaka said, “O Disciple! Please save me!”

“Try to relax,” said Pilgrim. “Wait till we seize the monster-spirit and you’ll be freed from your ordeal.”

“Get moving quickly!” said Tripitaka. “One more day and I’ll suffocate!”

“That’ll not happen! That’ll not happen!” said Pilgrim. “I’m off!” Turning around, he leaped right out of the gate and changed back into his original form. “Eight Rules!” he shouted.

Idiot and Sand-monk drew near, saying, “Elder Brother, what did you find out?”

“It’s this fiend all right,” said Pilgrim, “who captured Master. He is not yet hurt but he is imprisoned in a stone box. The two of you’d provoke battle at once after old monkey has gone back up to the surface of the water. If you two can capture him, do so; but if you can’t, feign defeat and entice him out to the surface. I’ll attack him then.”

“Have no worry, Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk. “You leave first and let us size up the situation.” Making the water-repelling sign with his fingers, Pilgrim darted out of the river and stood on the bank to wait for them.

Look how violent that 8 Rules could become! Dashing up to the gate, he shouted in a severe voice, “Brazen fiend! Send my master out!” The little monsters inside the gate were so alarmed that they went hurriedly to report, “Great King, someone at the gate is demanding his master.”

“That must be one of those brazen monks,” said the monster. “Bring out my armour!” The little fiends took it out quickly. After he was properly suited up, the monster picked up his weapon and walked out the gate. Facing him on the left and on the right were 8 Rules and Sand-monk who stared intently at him. *Dear monster! Look at him! His head wore a gleaming helmet of gold. A gold cuirass he had that flashed red light. Pearl- and jade-studded, a belt wrapped his waist. His feet wore strange boots of tobacco brown. The bridge of his nose rose high like a ridge. His forehead seemed like a dragon’s, broad and wide. Both round and fierce his blazing eyes would glare. His teeth, like steel swords, were even and sharp. His tousled short hair did shoot up like flames. His long beard was groomed like a golden awl. His mouth held a pond weed, tender and green. His hands gripped a nine-grooved red bronze mallet. As the gates swung wide open with a creak, he bellowed like the thunder of triple spring. Features like his are rare in human world. Hence he is called Great King of Numinous Power.* After the fiend walked out of the gates, about 100 little imps all wielding lances and swords, followed him out and stood in 2 columns behind him. “From which monastery you’ve come,” he asked 8 Rules, “and why’re you causing a disturbance here?”

“You brazen creature!” shouted 8 Rules. “You’re almost beaten to death! You argued with me the other night and yet you dare play ignorant and ask me again today? I’m a disciple of a holy monk from the Great Tang in the Land of the East and a pilgrim journeying to see God in the Western Heaven for scriptures. Befooling the people with your empty magic, you’re even audacious enough to call yourself Great King of Numinous Power and indulge in devouring virgin boys and girls from the Chen village. I’m One Load of Gold from the family of Chen Qing. Can’t you recognise me?”

“Monk,” said the monster, “you’re quite unreasonable! For taking on the form of One Load of Gold, you’d be charged with the crime of false identity. Not only did I not eat you but the back of my hand was also wounded by you. I’ve yielded to you already. How dare you come seeking trouble right up to my door?”

“If you’d yielded,” said 8 Rules, “then why did you raise up the cold wind and send down the great snowfall? Why did you make the ice to trap my master? Send him out quickly and all will be well. If but half a ‘No’ escapes from your teeth, I’ll never spare you! Just look at this rake in my hands!”

On hearing this, the fiend smiled sarcastically and said, “Monk, you’re wagging your tongue and bragging! It was I indeed who brought the snow and froze the river to abduct your master. Now you’re clamouring at my door and demanding his return but this time I fear isn’t quite the same as the time before. Previously, I brought no weapon with me as I thought I was attending a feast and you took advantage of me. Don’t run away now because I’m going to fight with you for three rounds. If you can withstand me, I’ll return your master; if you can’t, I’ll eat you also.”

“My darling child!” said 8 Rules. “That’s the way to talk! Take care, watch my rake!”

“So you became a monk midway in your life,” said the fiend.

8 Rules said, “My dear boy, you do have a little numinous power! How did you know that I became a monk midway in my life?”

“Since you’re using a rake,” said the fiend, “you must have been hired as a gardener somewhere, and now you’ve stolen even your master’s rake!”

“Son,” said 8 Rules, “this rake of mine is no garden tool. Look! *The huge teeth are forged like dragon claws; its handle’s white-gold wrapped, serpent shaped. When it’s used in battle, cold wind swoops down; put to combat, bright flames spring up. Able to smite fiends for the holy monk, it catches monsters on the westward way. When I move it, mist hides the sun and moon. When I use it, bright, coloured lights will shine. Mount Tai’s toppled and a thousand tigers cringe. The sea’s upturned, ten thousand dragons fear. Though you may have numinous power, one blow will give you nine big, gaping holes!*”

That fiend, of course, would not take such words seriously! He raised his bronze mallet and brought it down on 8 Rules’ head. Using his muckrake to parry the blow, 8 Rules said, “You brazen creature! So, you too, became a spirit midway in your life!”

“How could you tell that I became a spirit midway in my life?” asked the fiend.

“If you know how to use a bronze mallet,” said 8 Rules, “you must’ve been Arhats hired by some silversmith to tend the fires. You took advantage of him and stole his mallet!”

The fiend said, “This is no mallet for forging silver. Look! *Nine segments formed like petals of a flower; though hollow the stem’s made of evergreen. It’s nothing of this mortal world, it’s its birth and name in the house of gods. Green seeds and cases aged in the jasper pool; pure scent and nature born of a jade-green pond. Since I toiled to temper and refine it, it’s charged with magic and it’s hard as steel. Swords, halberds, and spears – all can’t rival it. Axes and lances – none can withstand it. Though your rake may be like a sharp-edged sword, my mallet will break it as it breaks a nail!*”

When Sand-monk saw how the two of them engaged in such exchanges, he could no longer restrain himself from approaching them and shouting, “Fiend! Stop this boasting! The ancients said, ‘What’s spoken proves nothing; only deeds are visible!’ Don’t run away. Have a taste of my staff!” Using the mallet to parry the blow, the fiend said, “So, you also are someone who became a monk midway in your life!”

“How did you know?” asked Sand-monk.

“The way you look,” said the fiend, “you resemble someone who used to work in a pastry shop.”

Sand-monk said, “How could you tell that I used to work in a pastry shop?”

“If you didn’t work there,” said the fiend, “how could you learn to use a rolling pin, like the one they made noodles with?”

“You cursed thing!” scolded Sand-monk. “Of course, you’ve seen nothing like this before! *This kind of weapon’s rare in the world; that’s why you don’t know the treasure staff’s name. It came from the moon – the shadow-less spot – carved from a piece of divine Śāla wood. Outside it’s decked with jewels luminous; within a hub of gold’s most glorious. In bygone days it attended royal feasts; now it follows Right and guards the Tang Monk. Few may know it on the way to the West; great fame it’s in the Region Above. It’s called the fiend-routing treasure staff: one blow and it’ll surely crack your skull!*”

In no mood to talk further, the fiend charged him; the 3 of them turned ferocious all at once and began a fierce battle at the bottom of the river. *Bronze mallet, treasure staff, and muckrake: aware of Ability and Awakened to Purity both engaged the fiend. 1 was Heavenly Reeds descending to earth; 1 was a divine warrior coming from the sky. Both attacked the water fiend, showing their power. This one withstood alone a god-monks – a laudable show! Proper affinity can perfect the great Dao: mutual growth or conquest holds Ganges’ sand. Earth conquers water and the bottom’s seen when water dries up; water begets wood that flourishing, will bloom like flowers. Chan and Dao, nurtured, lead to the same essence; elixir, refined and forged, tames the 3 parties. Earth is mum sprouting golden shoots; gold begets divine water and the baby’s born. Water’s the source to moisten wood. And wood, thriving, brings forth strong, bright fire. The conjoined 5 Phases will all differ: that is why they strive, each changing colours. Look! Each petal of that bronze mallet was fine and bright; the treasure staff was wrapped in a thousand strands of silk. The rake, made according to yin-yang and the stars dealt sundry blows without style or number. They risked their lives for the monk’s ordeal; courted death for Shakya-Sage’s sake. The bronze mallet was kept busy all the time, blocking staff on the left and rake on the right. The 3 of them fought for some 2 hours underneath the water and no decision could be reached. Supposing that they could not prevail against him, 8 Rules winked at Sand-monk, and the 2 of them at once feigned defeat. They turned and fled, their weapons trailing behind them. “Little ones,” ordered the fiend, “stay here. Let me catch up with these fellows and bring them back for you to eat.” Look at him!*

Like the wind blowing dead leaves and the rain beating down the withered flowers, he pursued them right up to the surface of the water. On the eastern shore, the Great Sage Sun was staring at the water with unblinking eyes. Suddenly huge waves arose in the river and there were shouts and roars. 8 Rules was the first to leap ashore, crying, “He’s coming! He’s coming!” Sand-monk, too, rushed up to the bank, crying, “He’s coming! He’s coming!” He was pursued by the fiend who yelled, “Where are you running to?” No sooner did he clear the water however, than he was met by Pilgrim, shouting, “Watch the rod!” Quickly swerving to dodge the blow, the fiend met him with upraised mallet. One of them churned up the waves near the edge of the river while the other showed forth his power on the bank. Before they reached even three rounds after they closed in, the fiend had already weakened. With a splash he plunged back into the river and disappeared; the wind and the waves thus subsided.

Pilgrim went back to high ground and said, “Brothers, you’ve worked very hard!”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “this monster-spirit might not do so well on land but he was quite formidable beneath the water. Second Elder Brother and I attacked him left and right and both of us could only manage to fight him to a draw. What shall we do to rescue Master?”

“Let’s not dillydally,” said Pilgrim, “for I fear that he may harm Master.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “we’ll go and try to entice him to come out again. You be quiet and wait for him in mid-air. Once his head emerges, you give him one of those garlic-pounding blows squarely on the top of his skull. Even if you don’t kill him, you’ll knock him dazed. Old bull can then finish him off with one blow of the rake.”

“Exactly! Exactly!” said Pilgrim. “That’s what we call mutual cooperation. Only that can accomplish anything.”

The 2 of them dove into the water again. Now that fiend fled in defeat and returned to his residence. As the various fiends met him, the perch-mum went up to him and said, “Great King, where did you chase those two monks to?”

The fiend said, “I didn’t realise that those monks have another helper who tried to hit me with an iron rod when they leaped ashore. I dodged the blow and fought with him. God knows how heavy that rod of his is! My bronze mallet couldn’t stand up to it at all. Before we finished three rounds, I’d to flee in defeat.”

“Great King,” said the perch-mum, “can you remember how that helper looked?”

“He has a hairy face and a thunder-god beak,” said the fiend, “forked ears and broken nose. A monk with fiery eyes and diamond pupils.” When the perch-mum heard this, she shuddered and said, “O Great King! It was smart of you to flee, and you escaped with your life! Three more rounds and you’ll not live at all! I know who that monk is.”

“Who is he?” asked the fiend. “Some years back I was living in the Great Eastern Ocean,” said the perch-mum, “and I heard the old Dragon King talking about him and his reputation. This monk is the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, the Handsome Monkey King who is a golden mortal of the great monad and of the primal chaos in the Region Above. Five centuries ago, he caused great havoc in the Celestial Palace but now he has embraced Religion to accompany the Tang Monk to go to the Western Heaven for scriptures. He has changed his name to Pilgrim Sun Wukong. He has tremendous magic powers and knows many ways of transformation. Great King, how could you tangle with him? From now on, you must not fight with him at all.” Hardly had she finished speaking when one of the little imps dashed in to report, “Great King, those two monks are here again to provoke battle.” The monster-spirit said, “My worthy sister’s opinion is very sound! I’m not going to face them again. See what they can do!” He gave hurriedly this order, “Little ones, shut the gates. As the proverb says, *you may call outside the door; your cries I’ll wholly ignore!* They may even stay here for a couple of days but when they get tired of it, they’ll leave. Then we can freely and leisurely enjoy the Tang Monk.” All those little fiends started to haul rocks and mud to seal up the entrance to the residence. When 8 Rules and Sand-monk shouted repeatedly without receiving any reply, Idiot in perturbation began to batter the gates with his rake. The gates, of course, were tightly shut but a few blows of the rake broke them down. Inside the gates however, was a solid wall of mud and rocks piled sky-high. When Sand-monk saw it, he said, “Second Elder Brother, this fiend is terribly afraid, and that’s why he shuts himself up and refuses to come out. You and I’d go back up to shore and discuss the matter with Big Brother.” 8 Rules agreed and they returned to the eastern shore.

Halfway between cloud and fog, Pilgrim stood waiting and holding his iron rod. When he saw the two of them emerge without the fiend, he lowered his cloud and met them on the bank. “Brothers,” he asked, “how is it that that thing has not come up?” Sand-monk said, “The fiend has shut his doors tightly and refused to come out to meet us. When Second Elder Brother broke the doors, we ran into a solid wall of mud and rocks inside. That’s why we’d not even do battle with him. We decided to return to talk to you and see how we’d make plans to rescue Master.”

“If that’s how he behaves,” said Pilgrim, “it’s quite hard to think of anything to overcome him. You two had better patrol the banks to make certain that he doesn’t escape to another place. Let me make a trip.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “where are you going?”

Pilgrim said, “I’m going to the Potalaka Mountain to make inquiry of the Nun. I want to find out the origin of this monster, his name and how I may search out his ancestral home. After I’ve seized his kinsfolk and all his relations, I can return here to rescue Master.”

With a laugh, 8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, the way you do things will waste a lot of time and energy!”

“I’ll waste no time or energy!” said Pilgrim. “I go, and I’ll be back at once!” *Dear Great Sage!*

Mounting the auspicious luminosity quickly, he left the river and headed straight for the South Sea. In less than half an hour, the Potalaka Mountain came into sight as he lowered his cloud and went up to the summit. The Twenty-four deities, the Great Mountain-Guardian, the disciple Liberation, Child Sudhana, and the Pearl-Bearing Dragon Girl all came forward to greet him. “Why did the Great Sage come here?” they asked.

Pilgrim said, “I must see the Nun.”

“The Nun left the cave this morning,” said the deities, “and forbade anyone to follow her. She went by herself into the bamboo grove though she left word that you’d arrive today and that we’d be here to receive you. She said she’d be unable to see you immediately. She asked you to be seated before the cliff for a while and wait for her to come out.”

Pilgrim obeyed and before he had even taken a seat, the Child Sudhana approached him saluting and said, “Great Sage Sun, I must thank you for your past kindness. The Nun’s gracious enough to take me in and I’ve been her constant companion, waiting upon her beneath her lotus platform. She’s in fact shown me great favours.”

Recognising that he was formerly the Red Boy, Pilgrim said with a laugh, “In the past you’re gripped by demonic delusions. Now that you’ve attained the right fruit, you must realise that old monkey’s a good person!”

After having waited for a long time, Pilgrim grew very anxious, and he said, “Please make the announcement for me, all of you. If there’s further delay, I do fear for my master’s life.”

“We daren’t,” said the deities, “for the Nun gave specific instruction that you’d wait for her to come out.”

As he had always been impulsive, Pilgrim, of course, could stand it no longer and dashed all at once into the bamboo grove. *Aha! This Handsome Monkey King was by nature most impulsive. The deities could not detain him when he wished to go inside. Deep into the grove he strode, his open eyes stealing a glance. There the salvific Honoured 1 sat, cross-legged, on bamboo leaves. Carefree and without makeup she looked so gentle and mild. Her tresses, undone, flowed down; she had no headgear with fringes. Her blue robe she did not wear but only a small waistcoat. A silk skirt wrapped round her waist. Her 2 feet were both naked. Her cloak’s silk sash was untied; her 2 arms were completely bare. Her jade-like hand held up a knife with which she peeled off bamboo skin.* When Pilgrim saw her, he could not refrain from calling aloud, “Nun, your disciple, Sun Wukong pays you sincere homage.”

“Wait outside,” commanded the Nun. Pilgrim went to his knees to respect, saying, “Nun, my master is facing a terrible ordeal. I came especially to ask you concerning the origin of the fiend at Heaven-Reaching River.”

“Go out of the grove,” said the Nun, “and wait till I come out.”

Not daring to force her, Pilgrim had no choice but to walk out of the bamboo grove. He said to the various deities, “The Nun seems to be all wrapped up today in her domestic affairs. Why is she not sitting at her lotus platform? Why she is not made up? Why does she look so gloomy, making bamboo slips in the grove?”

“We don’t know,” said the deities. “When she left the cave this morning, she went at once into the grove before she was even properly dressed. She told us also to wait for the Great Sage, and she must be doing something for your affairs.”

Pilgrim could do nothing but wait. After a while, the Nun emerged from the grove holding a purple-bamboo basket. “Wukong,” she said, “I’ll go with you to rescue the Tang Monk.” Kneeling down hurriedly, Pilgrim said, “Your disciple dares not press you. Let the Nun dress and ascend her seat first.”

“No need to dress,” said the Nun. “I can go with you just like this.”

Abandoning the deities, the Nun mounted the auspicious clouds immediately and rose into the air. *Great Sage Sun had to follow her!* In a moment, they arrived at the Heaven-Reaching River. On seeing them, 8 Rules said to Sand-monk, “Elder Brother is so impulsive! I wonder what sort of wild clamour he made at South Sea that forced an undressed and unadorned Nun to come here!” Hardly had he finished speaking when the Nun landed on the bank. Saluting, the two disciples said, “Nun, we’ve intruded upon you. Please forgive us!” Untying her sash from her vest, the Nun fastened it to the basket and rose halfway into the air on the clouds. She held the sash and lowered the basket into the river, pulling it toward the upper reach. Then she recited a spell, saying, “The dead depart; the living remain! The dead depart, the living remain!” She repeated this seven times and then lifted up the basket. Inside was a shiny goldfish, still blinking its eyes and tossing about.

“Wukong,” cried the Nun, “go into the water quickly and rescue your master.”

“But we’ve not yet captured the fiend,” said Pilgrim. “How could we rescue Master?”

“Isn’t the fiend in the basket?” asked the Nun. Saluting, 8 Rules and Sand-monk said, “How could the little fish get to be so powerful?”

“He is a goldfish reared in my lotus pond,” said the Nun. “Every day he’d float with the current to the surface to listen to my lectures, and his powers were acquired from his self-cultivation. That nine-petalled bronze mallet is a stalk supporting an unopened lotus bud that the process of his magic cultivation has made into a weapon. I don’t know which day it was when high tide carried him to this place. When I watched my flowers leaning on the railing this morning, this fellow did not come out to greet me. I made calculations then by consulting the grooves on my fingers and learned that he had become a spirit here, seeking to harm your master. That was why I didn’t even bother to put on my clothes or jewels, for I was exercising my divine powers to fashion this basket to catch him.”

“Nun,” said Pilgrim, “please remain here for a moment. Let me go and call together the believers in the Chen village so that they may gaze upon your golden visage. This will be your great favour toward them, and, moreover, the account of how you’ve captured the fiend will help these mortal humans to become your devout worshippers.”

“All right,” said the Nun. “Go and call them together quickly.” 8 Rules and Sand-monk sprinted back to the village, screaming, “Come, all of you, to see the living Nun Guanyin!” The inhabitants of the entire village, young and old, all rushed to the edge of the river. Without regard for the mud and water, they all knelt down and respected. Someone skilled in painting among them at once made a portrait of a goddess, and that was how the picture of the Guanyin with a fish basket came about. Thereafter, the Nun returned to South Sea.

Opening a path in the water, 8 Rules and Sand-monk went straight to the Sea-Turtle House to search for their master. The watery fiends and fish spirits inside were all dead. They went to the rear of the palace and opened the stone box. Then they carried the Tang Monk to leave the waves and to be reunited with the others on the shore. Chen Qing and his brother in gratitude respected to them, saying, “Venerable Dad, you’d have listened to our pleadings and you’d not have had to undergo such suffering.”

“No need to say that anymore,” said Pilgrim. “You people here will have no need to make any more sacrifices next year, for the Great King has been done away with. He will take no more lives. Mr. Chen, now we must count on you to find a boat to take us across the river.”

“We’ve one! We’ve one!” said Chen Qing. He at once gave the order to build a boat; when the villagers heard this, everyone responded with enthusiasm. One of them said that he would purchase the mast and another volunteered to get the oars. Some of them wanted to bring the ropes while still others promised to hire the sailors.

As they were making such clamour by the bank of the river, they suddenly heard this cry coming from the middle of the water: “Great Sage Sun, there’s no need for a boat that’ll only be a waste of money and materials. I’ll take you four across the river.” When the people heard this, they were so frightened that the timid ones fled back to the village while the more courageous among them, trembling all over, stole glances at where the voice was coming from. Instantly, out crawled a strange creature from the depths. He is a *square-headed divine not of this world; his name: a water god most subtle and shrewd. His tail can life prolong a millennium; he hides himself in a hundred rivers deep. Vaulting on waves and currents he comes to shore; facing the sun and wind he lies on the beach. Truly enlightened he nourishes his breath, an old turtle scabby headed and white shelled.* “Great Sage,” cried the old sea-turtle again, “don’t build the boat. I’ll take all of you, master and disciples across the river.”

Raising high his iron rod, Pilgrim said, “Cursed creature! If you dare approach me, I’ll kill you with one blow of my rod!”

“I’m grateful to the kindness of the Great Sage,” said the old turtle, “and that’s why I want to help all of you with the best intention. Why do you want to hit me instead?”

“What kindness have I shown you?” asked Pilgrim.

The old turtle said, “Great Sage, you don’t realise that the Sea-Turtle House down below happens to be my residence, a place my ancestors handed down to me from generation to generation. Since I’d awakened to my source and origin, I succeeded in nourishing my numinous breath to enable me to practice self-cultivation here. The house had been rebuilt by me and named the Sea-Turtle House. Nine years ago, that fiend arrived during a huge tidal wave, and at once he let loose his violence and fought with me. He slew many of my children and robbed me of many of my kinsfolk. I was no match for him, and my house was taken away by force. Now I’m truly indebted to the Great Sage who in his attempt to rescue his master, has succeeded in bringing the Nun Guanyin here to disperse all the fiendish miasma. With the monster seized, the house belongs to me once again. Now I can be reunited with my kin, young and old; I can occupy my old home again without having to rest on earth or recline on mud. This favour of yours is indeed great as a mountain and deep as the sea. But it is not just I myself who am indebted to you. The entire village here has been exempted from ever having to make the annual sacrifice, and countless children’s lives are spared. This is indeed a case of the double gain with a single move. Dare I not show my gratitude and try to repay you?”

Secretly pleased by what he heard, Pilgrim put away his iron rod and said, “Are you really sincere about this?” The old turtle said, “I’m a recipient of the Great Sage’s profound kindness. How dare I play false?”

“Swear to Heaven that you’re telling the truth,” said Pilgrim. Opening wide his huge red mouth toward the sky, the old turtle said, “If I don’t truly intend to send the Tang Monk across the Heaven-Reaching River, may my body turn into blood!”

“You come here then,” said Pilgrim, chuckling. Swimming to the edge of the river, the old turtle then crawled up the bank. When the people gathered about him to take a look, they found a huge white globe of a shell, about forty feet in its circumference. “Master,” said Pilgrim, “we can get on him and cross over.”

Tripitaka said, “Disciple, even that thick ice before gave us difficulty. I wonder if this turtle’s carapace is safe at all.”

“Please do not worry, Master,” said the old turtle, “I’m much safer than that thick ice! If I make even one slip, I’ll not achieve my merit.”

“O Master!” said Pilgrim. “It is not likely for a creature who has acquired human speech to lie. Brothers, bring us the horse! Quick!”

As they went to the edge of the river, the entire Chen village, young and old, all came to salute them. After Pilgrim led the horse up onto the back of the old turtle, he asked the Tang Monk to stand to the left of the horse’s neck, Sand-monk to the right, and 8 Rules at the back. Pilgrim himself stood in front of the horse. Fearing that the turtle might cause trouble nevertheless, he untied the sash of his tiger-skin kilt and fastened it to the nose of the turtle, pulling it up like a rein. He placed one foot on the turtle’s back and the other foot on its head; one hand held the iron rod while the other held the rein. “Old Turtle,” said he, “go slowly. One wrong move and I’ll give your head a blow!”

“I daren’t! I daren’t!” said the old turtle.

Stretching forth his four legs, the turtle trod on the surface of the water as smoothly as if he were walking on level ground. The people on shore all burned incense and respected everyone reciting, “*I respect the Infinite Light!*”

It was truly as if real *Arhats* were descending to earth and living Nuns revealing themselves. The people worshipped until they could no longer see the pilgrims before they dispersed. The master riding on the white turtle; in less than a day, they crossed the Heaven-Reaching River of eight hundred miles. With dry hands and feet, they went ashore, As Tripitaka landed, he pressed his palms together to give thanks saying, “I’ve troubled you, old Turtle but there is nothing I can give you. Let me acquire the scriptures first and when I come back, I’ll thank you then with a gift.”

The old turtle said, “There’s need for no gift from you, old Master. But I’ve heard that the Religious Patriarch in the Western Heaven’s not only transcended the process of birth and death but he’s also the knowledge of past and future. I’ve practiced self-cultivation here for a full thirteen centuries. Though I’ve lengthened my age and lightened my body and I’ve also acquired the knowledge of human speech, I find it difficult to shed my original shell. When you get to the Western Heaven, I beg the old Master to inquire of the Religious Patriarch and see when I may cast off my original shell to acquire a human body.”

Tripitaka said, “I promise to ask.” Then the old turtle turned around and plunged back into the water. Pilgrim helped Tang Monk to mount the horse, 8 Rules poled the luggage, and Sand-monk took up the rear. Master and disciples found the main road and started out again toward the West. Thus it was that *the holy monk sought God by decree through a vast distance and many ordeals. His mind was steadfast, undaunted by death; he crossed Heaven River on a turtle’s back.*

The stanzas of this poem is called *A Southern Branch*. It is meant to describe the Tang Monk and how he escaped from his ordeal of ice in the Heaven-Reaching River and how he ascended the other shore by standing on the white turtle. Master and the disciples, the four of them, followed the main road and set out again toward the West. It was the time of midwinter, and they saw *faint outlines of woodlands in the mists, clear frames of bare mountains in the stream*. As master and disciples walked along, they again came upon a huge mountain blocking their way. The road turned exceedingly narrow and the cliffs were tall; moreover, there were many rocks and the ridges were so steep that it would be difficult for humans or horses to proceed. Reining in his horse, Tripitaka called out, "Disciples." Pilgrim led Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk forward, saying, "Master, what do you've to say?" "Look how tall the mountain is ahead of us," said Tripitaka. "I fear that tigers and wolves might run rampant up there, or strange beasts might come out to attack us. Be careful!" "Please don't worry, Master," said Pilgrim. "We three brothers are united in a single effort to embrace the Right and seek the Real. We'll exercise our power to disperse monsters and subdue fiends. You need be afraid of no tigers or wolves!"

On hearing his words, Tripitaka felt more assured and urged his horse forward to ascend the cliff. As they did so, they glanced around and saw that it was quite a mountain indeed. *Rugged and soaring – pointed and towering – rugged and soaring it rises to the sky; pointed and towering it blocks the blue heavens. Strange rocks piled high like tigers sitting; hoary pines aslant like dragons flying. Atop the peak a bird sings a pretty poem; before the cliff the plums waft a strong, sweet scent. The brook swells and surges, its water cold; the clouds assail the summit, dense and dark. You also feel the drifting snow, the biting wind and the mountain's roaring, famished tiger. Jackdaws pick through the trees but find no nest; wild deer search in vain for a place to rest. Pity the travellers who can hardly walk: crestfallen, downcast, they cover their heads!* Master and disciples, the 4 of them braved the snow, cold to scale, shivering, and the rugged peak. After they passed it, they saw in the distance a towered building in the fold of the mountain and some charming buildings nearby. Delighted, the Tang Monk said on his horse, "O Disciples, I feel so cold and hungry today! It's a good thing that there're in the fold of the mountain that building and the houses. It's to be either a village, a mansion, an abbey, or a monastery. Let's go and beg for some food. We can move on after we've a meal." When Pilgrim heard this, he opened wide his eyes to look and saw that the place was shrouded with baleful clouds and diabolical air. "Master," he turned to speak to the Tang Monk, "that isn't a good place."

"There're buildings and houses," said Tripitaka. "Why isn't it a good place?" "O Master," said Pilgrim with a snicker, "how'd you know? There're plenty of monsters, demons on the way to the West, and they're most capable of devising<sup>2</sup> some form of houses or dwellings. It doesn't matter whether it's a towered building or a pavilion or some such edifice; any one of these can be merely a transformation to deceive people. You've heard of the saying that 'a dragon can beget nine kinds of offspring.' One of them is the giant clam; 'the breath this creature emits is luminous and takes on the appearance of buildings and houses. When a big river's caught in inclement weather, that's when the giant clam produces such a mirage. If some birds or crows happen to fly by and decide to rest their wings on these specious buildings, the clam will swallow them with one gulp. It's a vicious trap. When I see how baleful the aura's over there, I must tell you not to approach it."

"So we can't go over there," said Tripitaka, "but I'm really hungry!" "If you're, Master, please dismount," said Pilgrim. "Sit here on level ground and let me go somewhere to beg some vegetarian food for you to eat." Tripitaka consented and dismounted. After 8 Rules took hold of the reins, Sand-monk put down the luggage and untied the wrap to take out the alms bowl to hand over to Pilgrim. Taking it in his hand, Pilgrim gave this instruction to Sand-monk: "Worthy Brother, don't go forward. Just stand guard over Master sitting here. Wait until I come back with the food and we can then set out again to the West." Sand-monk obeyed, and Pilgrim said once more to Tripitaka, "Master, that place in front of us betokens more evil than good. Don't ever leave here and go elsewhere. Old monkey is off to beg for food."

"Talk no more," said the Tang Monk. "Just go quickly and come back. I'll wait for you here." Pilgrim turned and was about to leave but he walked back again to say, "Master, I realise you can't sit still for very long. Let me provide you with some means of safety." He took out his golden-hooped rod and drew on the level ground a large circle. The Tang Monk was asked to sit in its middle while 8 Rules and Sand-monk stood by either side of him. The horse and the luggage were placed near them, too. Then Pilgrim pressed his palms together to salute the Tang Monk, saying, "The circle drawn by old monkey here's as strong as an iron wall. No matter what they're – tigers, wolves, ogres, or demons – they'll daren't come near you. But you must not step out of the circle. Remain seated inside and no harm will come to you. But if you leave the circle, you'll in all likelihood meet with danger. Please take heed of my words! Please take heed of my words!"

Tripitaka agreed and all three of them sat down solemnly in the circle. Mounting the clouds, Pilgrim went south to search for a place to beg for food. Suddenly he saw some tall, aged trees, near which was a village. He lowered his cloud and took a careful look. He saw *snow abusing weak willows and ice frozen in the square pond; sparse bamboos waving their blue; dense pine trees holding their green; a few thatched huts half decked with silver; a small, slanted bridge powder-dusted; half-bloomed narcissus by the fence; long icicles dangling beneath the eaves. The piercing cold wind wafted a rare scent but snow hid the place where plum flowers bloomed*. As Pilgrim admired the scenery of the village, he heard one of the wooden gates open with a creak and out walked an old man who wore a lamb's-wool hat, a long robe full of holes, and a pair of grass sandals. Supporting himself with a staff, he looked up to the sky and said, "Ah, the northwest wind is rising. It'll be fair tomorrow." Hardly had he finished speaking when a Pekingese ran out from behind him and barked furiously at Pilgrim. Only then did the old man turn around. Pilgrim stood before him holding the alms bowl and saluted saying, "Old Benefactor, this priest happens to be someone sent by imperial decree of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God. We're passing through your region and my master is hungry. I've come to your honourable residence to beg you for some vegetarian food." When the old man heard this, he shook his head and struck the ground several times with his staff, saying, "Elder, you'd not beg for food just yet, for you've taken the wrong road."

"I've not," said Pilgrim. The old man said, "The main road to the Western Heaven's due north of here over a thousand miles away. You'd go and find that road at once." Pilgrim laughed and said, "Yes, it is due north of here, and my master right now is sitting beside that road and waiting for me to beg for food."

"This monk's babbling!" said the old man. "If your master is indeed waiting at the main road for you to beg for food, a distance of a thousand miles will require six or seven days of travelling one way, even if you happen to be an exceptionally adroit traveller. When you go back to him, it will take another week or so. By then, he would be long starved to death, wouldn't he?" Pilgrim laughed again and said, "To tell you the truth, Old Benefactor, I left my master not long ago and it took me no more than the time of drinking a cup of tea to get to this place. Once I succeed in begging some food, I'll rush back to serve it to him for lunch." On hearing this, the old man became terribly frightened, thinking to himself, "This priest is a ghost! A ghost!" He turned around and began to dash inside. Pilgrim made a grab at him and said, "Benefactor where are you going? If you've some food, donate it to us."

"It's not convenient! It's not convenient!" said the old man. "Go to some other family." "Benefactor," said Pilgrim, "you're not very considerate! As you said, this place is over a thousand miles away from the main road. If I go to another family, it may take another thousand miles. Wouldn't my master be really starved to death then?"

"To tell you the truth," said the old man, "there are altogether six or seven people in my family, and we've just washed and placed three pints of rice in the cauldron. It's not even fully cooked yet. Please go somewhere else to look for your food." Pilgrim said, "As the ancients said, 'Walking to three other houses is not like sitting in one.' This humble priest will sit here and wait." When the old man saw how persistent Pilgrim was, he became angry; lifting his staff, he struck out at Pilgrim. Not the least intimidated, Pilgrim allowed the old man to hit his bald head seven or eight times without a flinch – it was as if someone were scratching an itch for him! "This is a priest with a collision-proof head!" said the old man. "Venerable Sir," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "you can hit me all you want. But you'd better remember the number of blows you give me: one blow will cost you one pint of rice! You can take your time and measure it!" On hearing this, the old man quickly dropped his staff and ran inside. He slammed the door shut, yelling, "A ghost! A ghost!" The entire household was so terrified that both the front and the back doors were at once tightly bolted.

When Pilgrim saw that the doors were shut, he thought to himself, "This old rogue said that they had just washed the rice and placed it in the cauldron. I wonder if he was telling the truth. As the proverb says, 'The Daoists beg from the worthies but the Religious from the fools.' Let old monkey go in and take a look." *Dear Great Sage!* He made the magic sign with his fingers and used the magic of invisibility to walk straight into the kitchen: steam was indeed rising from the cauldron, for there was inside it half a cauldron of dried rice. He stuffed the alms bowl into the cauldron and gave it a strong scoop to fill the alms bowl with rice. He then mounted the clouds to go back to his master. The Tang Monk was sitting in the circle. He waited for a long time without seeing Pilgrim returning. Half rising, he said dejectedly, "Where did that ape go to beg for food?"

"Who knows!" said 8 Rules on one side, snickering. "He must have gone somewhere to play around! You think he's going to beg for food? He just wants us imprisoned here!" "What do you mean by imprisoned?" asked Tripitaka. "Don't you know, Master?" said 8 Rules. "The ancients drew on the ground to establish a jail. That's what he did! He drew a circle with his rod, and he claimed that it was stronger than a wall of iron. But if some tigers or ferocious beasts really showed up, how could this circle protect us? We might as well give ourselves to them for food!" "Aware of Ability," said Tripitaka, "what do you propose to do?" 8 Rules said, "This place can't shelter us from the wind or the cold. If you agree with Old bull, we'd follow this road and start out toward the West once more. If Elder Brother manages to get some food, he will no doubt return quickly, riding on his cloud. He should have no difficulty catching up with us and when there is food, we can stop and eat first before we move on. Sitting here all this time will only make our feet grow cold!"

It was the bad luck of Tripitaka to have heard these words! He agreed with Idiot and all of them walked out of the circle. 8 Rules led the horse while Sand-monk poled the luggage; the elder did not even climb on the horse. Following the road, he walked right up to the towered building and found that it was an edifice facing south. Outside the door was a brick wall painted white with corners like the word eight that connected with a small towered-gate decorated with carvings of lovebirds hung upside down and painted with five colours. The door of the building was half closed. 8 Rules tied the horse to one of the stoneware door wedges, and Sand-monk put down his pole. As he was sensitive to the cold wind, Tripitaka sat on the threshold. "Master," said 8 Rules, "this must be the residence of a noble man or an official. If we can't see anyone near the front door, all the inhabitants must be inside warming themselves by the fire. You two sit here, and let me go inside to take a look."

"Take care!" said the Tang Monk. "Don't offend people!" Idiot said, "I know! Since I was converted and entered the gate of Chan, I've acquired some manners! I'm not like one of those village fools!" Tying the muckrake to his waist, Idiot straightened out his blue silk shirt and walked inside in a civil manner. He saw three large front halls with all the curtains drawn up; the whole place was quiet and without a trace of any human inhabitant. There were neither furniture nor utensils. Passing the screens, he walked further inside and came upon a long corridor, behind which was a tall, two-story building. The windows on top were half opened, and one could see parts of a set of yellow silk curtains in the room. "The people must be afraid of the cold," said Idiot to himself. "They are still sleeping!" With no regard for manners, Idiot strode right up to the second story of the building. When he drew the curtains apart to take a look, he was so startled that he stumbled and fell. Inside the curtains and lying on top of an ivory bed was a skeleton of sickly white. The skull was big as a jar and the leg bones, straight as poles, were about four or five feet long. After he had calmed down, Idiot could not restrain the tears rolling down his cheeks. Shaking his head and sighing, he said to the skeleton, "I wonder you're *the remains of a marshal of which nation or domain or state a great general. Once you're a hero striving to win; today how piteously you show your bones. Your children and wife aren't here to serve you; no soldiers burn incense to honour you. You're truly most lamentable a sight: you who used to seek rule by might or right!*"

As 8 Rules thus lamented, he suddenly saw a flare of light behind the curtains. "Someone must be here after all to offer incense to him," said Idiot. He went behind the curtains hurriedly to look and found that rays of light were coming through some screens set up in a side room. Behind the screens was a lacquered table, on which there were several garments made of embroidered silk brocade. When Idiot picked them up, he saw that they were three silk vests. Without regard for good or ill, he took the vests and came down the building. He went back through the front halls to walk out the door. "Master," he said, "there's no trace of anyone living inside. It's in fact a residence of the deceased. Old bull went inside and walked upstairs to the tall tower where there was a skeleton inside some yellow silk curtains. In a side room there were three silk vests that I've brought with me. This has to be our luck, at least a little of it! Since it's turning cold now, we can make good use of them. Master, take off your outer garment and put on one of those vests. Enjoy, so you'll not feel the cold so much."

"No! No!" said Tripitaka. "For the *Code Book* says, 'To take things, whether in open or in secret, is thievery.' If someone found out and caught up with us, the officials would undoubtedly charge us with the crime of theft. Take them back and put them at the place you found them. We can sit here for a while to escape from the wind, and when Wukong arrives, we'll move on. Those of us who have left the family should not be so covetous of small gains!" 8 Rules said, "There's not a single person around, even dogs or chickens are unaware of our presence. Only we know what we've done. Who will file charges against me? Who'll be a witness? It was as if I'd picked up these vests from the road. What do you mean by taking in open or in secret?"

"You act foolishly!" said Tripitaka. "Though man may not know it, will Heaven be ignorant of it? Xuande left this instruction: *he may conscience slyly despise but like lightning are a god's eyes*. 'Return them quickly! Don't be greedy for things which do not belong to you.'" Idiot, of course, refused to listen. Laughing, he said to the Tang Monk, "O Master! Since I became a human, I've worn several vests but none made with such lovely brocade. If you'll not want to put it on, let Old bull put it on. I'm going to try something new, and I want to warm my back a bit. When Elder Brother arrives, I'll take it off and we'll move on."

"If that's the way you put it," said Sand-monk, "I'll try one, too!"

The 2 of them took off their shirts and put on the vests. They were just trying to tighten the straps when all of sudden they could no longer stand up and tumbled to the ground. The vests somehow turned out to be like two straitjackets; in an instant, the two of them had their arms twisted backwards and firmly bound behind their backs. Tripitaka was so taken aback that he stamped his feet and chided them; he then went forward to try to untie them but it was all to no avail. As the three of them made continuous clamour over there, a demon was soon alerted. That towered building had indeed been devised by a monster-spirit who had spent the days ensnaring people at the place. As he sat in his own cave, he suddenly heard noises of complaint and expostulation. When he hurried out to have a look, he found two victims all tied up. The demon called up his little imps quickly and did away with the buildings and towers. The Tang Monk was seized, along with the white horse and the

luggage. Then they herded all of them, including 8 Rules and Sand-monk, into the cave. After the old demon took his seat high in the middle, the little fiends pushed the Tang Monk forward and forced him to kneel down. “Where did you come from, monk?” asked the old demon. “How dare you be so bold as to steal my garments?”

As tears rolled down, the Tang Monk said, “This poor monk is someone sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. Stricken with hunger just now, I told my senior disciple to go to beg for food and he hasn’t returned. He told us to remain seated in the mountain, and if we’d listened to him, we’d not have trespassed your mortal court to find shelter from the cold wind. It was here that these two young disciples of mine grew covetous of small things after they found your clothes. Your poor monk certainly had no evil intentions, and they were told to return the vests to where they were found. Refusing to listen to me, they wanted to wear them just to warm their backs, and that was how they fell into the traps set by the Great King. Since you’ve caught me, I beg you to be merciful and spare my life so that I may proceed to acquire the true scriptures. I’ll always be grateful for your grace and kindness that I’ll forever proclaim when I return to the Land of the East.”

“I’ve often heard,” said the demon, chuckling, “that if anyone eats a piece of the Tang Monk’s flesh, his white hair will turn black, and his fallen teeth will grow back once more. Today it is my good fortune that you’ve arrived without my beckoning. And you still expect me to spare you? What is the name of your big disciple? Where did he go to beg for food?” On hearing the question, 8 Rules said loudly and boastfully, “My Elder Brother’s Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who caused great havoc in Heaven five centuries ago.”

When the demon heard that declaration, he became rather apprehensive. Though he did not utter a word, he thought to himself, “I’ve heard for a long time that that fellow’s vast magic powers. I didn’t expect that I’d meet him by chance like this.” Then he gave the order: “Little ones, tie them up also with 2 new ropes. Put them all in the rear. Wait until I’ve caught their big disciple. Then we can steam them all together to eat them.”

The little fiends obeyed with a shout and tied up all three of them before they were carried to the rear. The white horse was chained in the stable and the luggage was left in the house. Then the various monster-spirits began sharpening their weapons to prepare to catch Pilgrim. Pilgrim Sun after he had stolen an alms bowlful of rice from the village in the south, mounted his cloud to return to where he began. By the time he reached the slope of the mountain and lowered his cloud, he saw that the Tang Monk was gone. The circle he drew with his rod could be seen on the ground but neither the people nor the horse were anywhere in sight. He quickly turned his head to look toward the towered buildings and found that these, too had disappeared. All he saw were strange rocks and mountain ridges. Aghast, Pilgrim said, “That’s it! They must have fallen into danger!”

Following the tracks of the horse he hurried along the road toward the West. He journeyed for about five or six miles, and as he became more and more dejected, he heard all at once someone speaking on the northern slope. When he looked, he saw that it was an old man who had on a thick woollen robe, and his head was covered by a warm hat. On his feet he had on a pair of half-new leather boots which had been nicely waxed. He supported himself with a staff that had a dragon head, and he was followed by a young houseboy. The old man also carried a twig of winter-plum blossoms in his hand, and as he walked down the slope, he was reciting some kind of poem. Putting down his alms bowl, Pilgrim faced him and saluted saying, “Old Grandpa, this humble priest salutes you.”

Returning his salute, the old man said, “Where did you come from, elder?”

Pilgrim said, “We came from the Land of the East, on our way to seek scriptures from God in the Western Heaven. Master and disciples, there were altogether four of us. Because my master was hungry, I was sent to beg for some vegetarian food. I told the three of them to sit on a level spot by the mountain slope back there to wait for me. By the time I came back however, they had disappeared. I don’t know which road they took. May I ask, Old Grandpa, whether you’ve seen them?” When the old man heard this, he snickered and said, “Was there someone with a long horn and huge ears among those three?”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” said Pilgrim.

“Was there also someone with a gloomy complexion tugging a white horse and leading a pale-faced stout-ish monk?”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” said Pilgrim.

The old man said, “You’ve taken the wrong road, all of you! Don’t bother to look for them. Each of you’d flee for your life!” Pilgrim said, “The pale-faced one is my master, and those strange-looking priests are my younger brothers. They and I were united in our determination to go to the Western Heaven for scriptures. How could I not go to search for them?”

“I passed through this region some time ago,” said the old man, “and I saw them taking the wrong road that had to lead them straight into the mouth of demons.”

“Old Grandpa,” said Pilgrim, “please tell me what kind of a demon there is and where does he live, so that I may demand their return at his door.”

The old man said, “This Mountain’s named the Golden Helmet Mountain and in it there is a Golden Helmet Cave. The master of the cave’s the Great King One-Horned Buffalo who’s vast magic powers and who is most capable in the martial arts. Your three companions this time must have lost their lives, and if you go there to search for them, I fear that you, too, may get yourself killed. Perhaps it’s better for you not to go. I don’t want to keep you from going but I certainly am not going to encourage you either. It’s your decision.”

Saluting repeatedly to thank him, Pilgrim said, “I’m grateful to the Old Grandpa for his instructions. But I can’t possibly give up my search!” He was about to pour out the rice that he took from the village in the south to give to the old man so that he could put away the empty bowl when the old man lay down his staff and took away the alms bowl. All at once the houseboy and the old man both revealed their true forms and went to their knees to respect. “Great Sage,” they cried in unison, “these humble deities dare not hide anything from you. We’re the mountain god and the local spirit of this region, and we’ve come to receive you here. Let us keep the bowl and the rice for the moment, so that the Great Sage can exercise his power. When the Tang Monk is rescued, the rice will then be presented to him and he will appreciate what reverence and devotion the Great Sage has shown him.”

“You’re asking to be beaten, clumsy ghosts!” bellowed Pilgrim. “If you knew that I’d arrived, why didn’t you show up earlier to meet me? Why must you come in shabby disguises?”

“The Great Sage is rather impetuous,” said the local spirit, “and this humble deity dares not confront you directly. That’s why we camouflage ourselves to report to you.” Calming down more and more, Pilgrim said, “I’ll only make a note of your beating this time! Take care of that alms bowl for me, and let me go and catch that monster-spirit.” The local spirit and the mountain god obeyed.

Tightening his sash on his tiger-skin kilt which he hitched up, Great Sage dashed into the mountain to look for the fiend’s cave, holding high his golden-hooped rod. He passed one of the cliffs and saw more strange boulders and two stone doors just beneath a green ledge. In front of the doors were many little imps, wielding lances and waving swords. Truly there were *mists in auspicious folds; moss in bluish clumps; strange rugged rocks stood in array; rough winding paths coiled round and round. Apes cried and birds recited in this lovely scene; phoenixes male and female, exercised as in Peng-Ying. ³A few plums, facing the east, began to bloom; warmed by the sun, the bamboos displayed their green. Beneath the steep ridge – within the deep brook – beneath the steep ridge snow piled high like powder; within the deep brook water froze as ice. Pines and cedars fresh for a millennium; bunches of mountain tea all glowing red.* As he did not go there merely to admire the scenery, Great Sage strode up to the doors and cried out in a severe voice, “Little imps! Go inside quickly and tell your cave master that I’m Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, and the disciple of the holy monk from the Tang court. Tell him to send out my master quickly so that all of your lives may be spared.”

That group of fiends dashed inside to report, “Great King, there is a hairy-faced priest with a curved beak outside. He calls himself Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, and he has come to demand the return of his master.” When he heard this announcement, the demon king was delighted. “I wanted him to come!” he said. “Since I left my former palace and descended to earth, I’ve never had a chance to practice martial art. Today he’s here and will be a worthy opponent.” He gave the order at once for his weapon to be brought out, and every one of those fiends, young and old, in the cave aroused himself. They hurriedly hauled out a twelve-foot-long spotted-steel lance to present to the old fiend. Then the old fiend gave this order: “Little ones, all of you must follow orders. Those who advance will be rewarded; those who retreat will be executed.”

The fiends all obeyed and followed the old demon who when he walked out of the cave, asked aloud, “Who’s Sun Wukong?”

On one side Pilgrim took a look at that demon king and saw that he was ugly and ferocious indeed: *a jagged, single horn; a pair of gleaming eyes; coarse skin swelling up from his head; dark flesh glowing beneath his ears. A long tongue off ’ licking his nose; a wide mouth full of yellow teeth. His hide is like indigo blue; tendons are tough as steel. Rhino-like, though he can’t light up the stream; ⁶ steer-like though he can’t plough the fields. He has no use at all for tilling the soil though he has the strength to shake Heaven and Earth. His 2 dyed-blue hands with tendons brown grasp firmly the long, straight, spotted-steel lance. You’ll see why, if you stare at his fierce form, he’s called Great King 1-Horned Buffalo.*

Pilgrim Sun walked up to him and said, “Your Grandpa Sun is here! Give me back my master quickly, and you’ll suffer no harm. Utter but half a ‘No,’ and I’ll see to it that you die faster than you can select your burial ground!”

“You audacious, brazen monkey-spirit!” shouted the demon. “What abilities do you’ve that you dare indulge in such tall talk?”

“You brazen fiend,” said Pilgrim, “it’s only you who has never seen the abilities of old monkey!”

The demon said, “Your master stole some garments of mine and I caught him all right. And now I’m just about to have him steamed and eaten. What kind of a warrior you’re that you dare demand his return at my door?”

“My master’s an honest and upright priest,” said Pilgrim. “It’s impossible that he’d want to steal things from a fiend like you!”

The demon replied, “I created a mortal village beside the mountain and your master sneaked into one of the buildings. What he saw he coveted, took three of my vests of silk brocade and put them on. I’d prof derived from both the stolen goods and witnesses, and that was why I seized him. If you indeed are able, you’d try your hand with me. If you can withstand me for three rounds, I’ll spare your master’s life. If you can’t, I’ll send you to the Region of Darkness!”

With a laugh, Pilgrim said, “Brazen creature! No need for this bravado! If you speak of trying my hand, you’re after old monkey’s own heart. Come up here and have a taste of my rod!”

The fiendish creature of course was in no wise afraid of any combat. Raising his lance, he stabbed at Pilgrim’s face. This was quite a marvellous battle! *Look at the golden-hooped rod upraised – the long-shafted lance going out – the golden-hooped rod upraised is brilliant as the golden snakes of lightning. The long-shafted lance going out is radiant like a dragon leaving the ink-dark sea. The little imps beat the drums before the door as they spread in formation to help the fight. Over here Great Sage uses his might to reveal, back and forth, his abilities. On that side there is a lance, alert and spirited; on our side there is a rod – such lofty art of combat! Truly a hero has met a hero true; a foe has found another worthy foe. That demon king belches purple breath like lightning coils; this Great Sage’s eyes flash forth rays like brocade clouds. Because a Great Tang Monk faces an ordeal, they strive bitterly without forbearance.* Closing repeatedly for more than thirty times, they could not reach a decision. When that demon king saw how perfect Wukong’s style was in using his rod, how there was not even the slightest false move, he was so pleased that he shouted bravos repeatedly, saying, “Marvellous ape! Marvellous ape! Truly abilities like these are worthy to cause havoc in Heaven!” That Great Sage, too, was also pleased by the methodical way in which the demon king wielded his lance: as he parried left and right, every blow and every thrust were in perfect form. “Marvellous spirit! Marvellous spirit!” cried the Great Sage also. “Truly a demon capable of stealing elixir!”

The two of them therefore fought for twenty more rounds. Using the tip of his lance to point at the ground, the demon king shouted for the little imps to attack together. All those brazen fiends, wielding swords, scimitars, staffs, and spears, rushed forward at once and surrounded the Great Sage Sun completely. Entirely undaunted, Pilgrim only cried, “Welcome! Welcome! That’s exactly what I want!” He used his golden-hooped rod to cover his front and back, to parry blows east and west but that gang of fiends refused to be beaten back. Growing more agitated, Pilgrim tossed his rod up into the air, shouting, “Change!” It changed immediately into iron rods by the hundreds and thousands; like flying snakes and soaring serpents, they descended onto the fiends from the air. When those monster-spirits saw this, everyone was frightened out of his wits. Covering their heads and necks, they fled toward their cave for their lives. The old demon king however, stood still and, laughing with scorn, said, “Monkey, don’t be impertinent! Watch my trick!” He at once took out from his sleeve a white, shiny fillet and tossed it up in the air, crying, “Hit!” With a swish, all the iron rods changed back into a single rod that was then sucked up by the fillet. The Great Sage Sun, completely empty-handed, had to use his somersault desperately in order to escape with his life. *Thus the demon, in victory, returned to his cave but Pilgrim in a daze knew not what to do. Truly it is that the Dao is one foot but demons are 10 feet tall. Nature reels, feelings faint – the wrong home you find. Religion-self, alas, has no proper seat: his act that time stems from a faulty mind!*

## 051

### Mind Monkey in vain uses 1000 tricks; futile water & fire makes it hard to smelt demons

The Great Sage Equal to Heaven who fled in defeat, empty-handed. He went to the back of the Golden Helmet Mountain, and as he sat down, big drops of tears fell from his eyes. “O Master!” he cried. “I’d hopes that you and I *since God’s grace had both kindness and peace would find same youth, same life as my lasting wish: to live, work, seek the same release with same will, same mercy to show our spirits’ fruit; to reason and think the same, our minds truly one; to know and behold the same open way. I knew not I’d lose the staff of my will. ¹How’d I prosper with empty hands and feet?*” After lamenting like this for a long time, the Great Sage thought to himself, “That monster-spirit recognised me! When we’re fighting just now, I remember him paying me the compliment: ‘Truly someone worthy to cause havoc in Heaven!’ Judging from this, I can’t imagine that he is a fiend of this mortal world; he has to be some evil star of Heaven who descended to Earth out of longing for the world. I wonder what sort of demon he really is and where he dropped down from. I’ll have to go to the Region Above to make an investigation.”

Thus it was that Pilgrim, using the mind to question the mind, deliberated with himself and thereby gained control of himself. Leaping up, he mounted the auspicious cloud and went straight before the South Heaven Gate. As he raised his head, he was suddenly met by the Deity-King Virūpākṣa who saluted low and said to him, “Where is the Great Sage going?”

“I must have an audience with the Jade Emperor,” said Pilgrim.

“What’re you doing here?” Virūpākṣa said, “Today it’s my turn to patrol the South Heaven Gate.”



Hardly had he finished speaking when Ma, Zhao, Wen, Guan, the 4 grand marshals all appeared, and greeted Pilgrim, saying, “Great Sage, we’re sorry that we’ve not come to meet you. Please have some tea with us.”

“But I’m busy,” said Pilgrim whereupon he took leave of Virūpākṣa and the four grand marshals and went inside the South Heaven Gate. When he arrived before the Hall of Divine Mists, he ran into Zhang Daoling, Mortal Ge, Xu Jingyang, Qiu Hongzhi, the six officers of the Southern Dipper, and the seven heads of the Northern Dipper. Meeting Pilgrim before the hall, they all raised their heads to greet him, saying, “Why has the Great Sage come here?” Immediately thereafter, they asked again, “Have you perfected the merit of accompanying the Tang Monk?”

“It’s still too early! It’s still too early!” said Pilgrim. “With so large a distance and so many demons, we’ve managed to accomplish only half the merit. Right now we’re stranded in the Golden Helmet Cave of the Golden Helmet Mountain where a bovine monster has Master Tang captured in the cave. Old monkey found the way to his door and fought with him but that fellow had such vast magic powers that he managed to rob old monkey of his golden-hooped rod. That’s why it is so difficult to arrest that demon king. I suspect that he has to be some evil star from the Region Above who has descended to Earth out of longing for the world but I really don’t know what sort of demon he is or where he comes from. For this reason old monkey came to seek the Jade Emperor and to charge him with the offence of not keeping his household under control.”

“This ape head,” chuckled Xu Jingyang, “is still so mischievous!”

“I’m not being mischievous,” said Pilgrim. “It’s just that old monkey has been inquisitive all his life, and that’s how he finds things out.”

“No need to talk further,” said Zhang Daoling, “let’s announce his arrival for him.”

“Thank you! Thank you!” said Pilgrim.

The four Celestial Masters indeed went into Divine Mists to make the announcement and led Pilgrim to have an audience with the Jade Emperor. Saluting deeply to the throne, Pilgrim said, “Venerable Sir, I’m sorry to have troubled you! I’m sorry to have troubled you. Since old monkey began to accompany the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven, our journey has encountered more misfortune than good luck. But that goes without saying, I suppose! Right now a bovine monster has captured the Tang Monk in the Golden Helmet Cave of the Golden Helmet Mountain, and I don’t know whether my master will be steamed, cooked, or sun-dried. Old monkey found the way to his door and fought with the fiend who seemed to recognise old monkey vaguely. His magic powers however, are great indeed; he even managed to rob old monkey of his golden-hooped rod, thus making it difficult for me to seize any monster. I’ve a suspicion that this monster is an evil star from Heaven who descended to the Region Below out of longing for the world. For this reason old monkey came especially to memorialise to you. I beg the Celestial Worthy in his compassion to grant me my request. Please issue a decree to find out the identity of the evil star and to send troops to arrest this demon. Old monkey makes this request with the utmost fear and trembling.” Saluting deeply again, he said, “Such is my petition to be made known.”

On one side, Mortal Ge chuckled and said, “How is it that our ape behaves so haughtily at first and so humbly afterwards?”

“How should I dare?” asked Pilgrim. “I’m not acting haughtily at first and humbly afterwards but right now I’m a monkey who has no rod to play with.”<sup>2</sup>

When the Jade Emperor heard this memorial, he at once gave a decree to the Kehan Bureau,<sup>3</sup> saying, “In accordance with the memorial of Wukong, conduct an investigation among all the stars and planets of various Heavens and among all the divine kings of the various galaxies to see if anyone has been led to leave the Region Above out of longing for the world. Return to make your report as soon as you’ve fulfilled the decree. Such is our statement to be made known.”

The adept Perfected Lord Kehan received the decree and went at once with the Great Sage to conduct this investigation. They first examined the various officials under the command of the Deity-Kings of the four Heaven Gates; next, they examined the various realised mortals, young and old, among the Three Forbidden Enclosures;<sup>4</sup> then they checked through Tao, Zhang, Xin, Deng, Gou, Bi, Pang, and Liu, the thunder deities; and finally, they searched through all thirty-three Heavens but no disturbance was found in any of them. They then examined the twenty-eight lunar mansions: the seven mansions of the East containing the constellations Citrā, Nīṣṭyā, Viśākhā, Anurādhā, Bāhu,<sup>5</sup> Mūlabarhaṇī, and East-Aṣādhā; the seven mansions of the West<sup>6</sup> containing the constellations Uttara-Aṣādhā, Abhijit, Śravaṇā, Śraviṣṭha, Śatabhiṣā, East -Proṣṭhāpada, and North-Proṣṭhāpada. What they found was that all of these mansions including those of the North 7 mansions and South 7 mansions were peaceful and quiet. They then examined the Sun, the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, and Saturn – the Seven Regulators – together with Rahu, Ketu, Qi, and Bo, the four Stars of Excesses. Of all the stars and planets in Heaven, there was not a single one who left for the Region Below out of longing for the world. “Since this is the case,” said Pilgrim, “old monkey has no need to return to the Hall of Divine Mists. After all, it’s not good to disturb the Jade Emperor once again. You may go back to make your report, and I’ll wait here to see if there is any further message for me.”

The adept Perfected Lord Kehan agreed. As Pilgrim Sun waited there, he composed a poem to record his impressions. The poem says:

*Clear wind and fair clouds make felicity; Quiet gods and bright stars show propitious signs.  
The cosmos at peace, Earth and Heaven prosper. At all 5 quarters arms and banners recline.*

After having made a thorough search everywhere, the adept Perfected Lord and Master of the Kehan Bureau returned to report to the Jade Emperor with this memorial: “None’s missing among the stars and mansions of Heaven; the divine warriors of all quarters are present. There is no one who has left for the Region Below out of longing for the world.” When the Jade Emperor heard this, he gave the order: “Let Wukong select a few celestial warriors to help him to capture the demon in the Region Below.”

The four Celestial Masters, having received this decree, went out of the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists and said to Pilgrim, “O Great Sage, since there is no god in the Celestial Palace who longs for the world, the Jade Emperor in his great mercy has asked you to select a few divine warriors instead to help you capture the demon.” Saluting his head, Pilgrim thought to himself, “Those warriors in Heaven whose abilities are not as good as old monkey’s are plentiful but those just as good are few. Remember when I caused great havoc in the Celestial Palace: the Jade Emperor sent out one hundred thousand Heaven soldiers with cosmic nets but there is not a single person who could stand up to me. They found my match only when they called up the Little Sage Erlang. Now this fiend has abilities as strong as old monkey’s. How could we prevail against him?”

Perceiving the meaning of his silence, Xu Jingyang said, “This time is not quite the same as last time! As the proverb says, ‘One thing will vanquish specifically another.’ You can’t quite disobey the decree, can you? Use your judgement and select your celestial warriors. Don’t allow your hesitation to cause unnecessary blunder.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “I’m grateful for the imperial favour. Indeed, I don’t want to disobey the decree, nor does old monkey wish to make this trip in vain. Let me trouble Jingyang to report to the Jade Emperor that I’d like to be accompanied by Deity-King Li, the Pagoda Bearer, and Prince Nāṭa. They have quite a few weapons designed to capture fiends. Let us go down below to do battle once with that fiend and see how things stand. If we manage to capture him, it will be the luck of old monkey; if not, we can then decide what to do next.”

And so that Celestial Master made the report to the Jade Emperor who gave an order at once for Deity-King Li, dad and son, to lead an army of celestial soldiers to assist Pilgrim. The Deity-King accepted the order and came to meet Pilgrim who said again to the Celestial Master, “I can’t thank the Jade Emperor enough for sending along the Deity-King. There’s one more request which I must trouble you to make known for me: we need the service of two thunder squires. When the Deity-Kings fight with that demon, the thunder squires stationed at the edge of the clouds can aim their thunderbolts at the crown of his head. Isn’t that a good plan for killing the monster?”

“Marvellous! Marvellous! Marvellous!” said the Celestial Master, laughing.

He indeed presented this plan to the Jade Emperor. The Jade Emperor issued another decree to the Mansion of 9-fold Heaven where Deng flower and Zhang Fan, the two thunder squires, were ordered to assist the Deity-King in capturing the monster. They therefore went out of the South Heaven Gate with the Deity-King and the Great Sage Sun. In a moment they arrived at their destination. “This mountain’s,” said Pilgrim, “the Golden Helmet Mountain and the Golden Helmet Cave’s right in the middle. Please decide among yourselves which of you’ll go there to provoke battle first.”

Lowering the direction of his cloud, Deity-King Li ordered the celestial soldiers to pitch camp on the south slope of the mountain. “The Great Sage’s,” he said, “always known that my son Nāṭa once subdued the demons of ninety-six caves. Most adroit in transformations, he carries with him many weapons for the subjugation of fiends. Let him go into battle first.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “let old monkey be the prince’s guide.”

Rousing his heroic powers, that prince leaped with the Great Sage into the tall mountain and arrived at the cave’s entrance. They found the door tightly shut and not a single spirit below the rocky ledge. Walking forward, Pilgrim shouted: “Brazen demon, open the door quickly! Return my master!”

The little fiends standing guard at the doors inside the cave hurriedly made the report: “Great King, Pilgrim Sun’s leading a boy to provoke battle in front of our door.”

“The iron rod of the monkey’s,” said the demon king, “taken by me. Since he can’t fight with empty hands, he must’ve gotten help now. Fetch my weapon!” Gripping the lance in his hands, the demon king walked out the door to have a look: he found a little boy with rare and refined features and who had a sturdy build. Truly *his coy, jade-like face is like a full moon; ruddy lips and square mouth show silver teeth. Protrusive eyeballs give lightning-like gaze; bangs crowd his broad forehead like gathered mists. His sash like flying flames exercises in the wind; sunlit, his brocade robe sheds golden blooms. Brilliant straps hold up his heart-guarding disk; lustrous armour matches his battle boots. Though small of body, his voice rings loud and strong: this faith-defender, fierce Nāṭa of 3 Heavens.*

With a laugh the demon king said, “You’re the third child of Deity-King Li who bears the name Prince Nāṭa. Why’re you clamouring at my door?”

“Because of the disorder perpetrated by you, brazen demon!” said the prince. “So you seek to imprison and harm the holy monk from the Land of the East. By the golden decree of the Jade Emperor, I’ve come especially to arrest you.” Growing very angry, the demon king said, “You must have been asked by Sun Wukong to come here. I’m the evil star of that Tang Monk, all right! But what sort of martial skill does a small boy like you possess that you dare mouth such arrogant words? Don’t run away! Have a taste of my lance!”

Wielding his fiend-cutting sword, the prince met him head-on. As the two of them joined hands and began their contest, the Great Sage dashed past the mountain slope and cried out: “Thunder squires, where’re you? Get down there quickly and aim your thunderbolts at the demon. Help the prince to subdue him.” Treading on the cloudy luminosity, Deng and Zhang, the two squires, were just about to attack when they saw the prince resorting to magic. Shaking his body, he changed himself into someone with 3 heads and 6 arms holding 6 kinds of weapons to attack the demon. The demon king also changed himself into someone with 3 heads and 6 arms using 3 long lances to defend himself. Exercising his fiend-routing power even further, the prince tossed his 6 weapons in the air. They are a monster-cleaving sword, a monster-slashing scimitar, a monster-binding rope, a monster-taming club, an embroidered ball, and a fiery wheel. “Change!” he roared.

The weapons changed into hundreds and thousands. Like a thundershower and a sleet storm, these weapons rained down on the head of the demon. Not the least bit daunted, the demon king took out with one hand that sombre white fillet. He tossed it into the air, crying, “Hit!” With a loud whoosh, the six weapons were all sucked away by it. In desperation Prince Nāṭa fled for his life with empty hands while the demon king turned back in triumph. In mid-air Deng and Zheng, the two thunder squires, smiled nervously to themselves and said, “It’s a good thing that we looked over the situation first and didn’t release the thunderbolts immediately. If they’d been sucked away by him, how’d we go back to face the Celestial Worthy?”

Lowering the direction of their clouds, the two squires went with the prince to the southern slope and said to Deity-King Li, “That demon indeed has vast magic powers!”

Giggling, Wukong said on one side, “His powers are only so-so but that fillet of his is formidable. I wonder what kind of treasure it’s that can suck away things like that.”

“This Great Sage isn’t very mature!” grumbled Nāṭa angrily. “We’ve lost our weapons and fled in defeat – we’re sorely distressed all because of you. And you’re giggling there instead! Why?”

“You speak of being distressed,” said Pilgrim, “you think old monkey in the last analysis isn’t distressed? But I’ve neither plan nor alternative at the moment. I can’t cry and that’s why I’m giggling!”

The Deity-King asked, “How’re we going to bring this to an end?”

“You may discuss the matter some more,” said Pilgrim, “but one thing’s certain: whatever object can’t be sucked away by that fillet will be able to seize that fiend.”

“Only water and fire can resist being sucked away,” said the Deity-King, “for as the proverb says: *water and fire are ruthless.*”

When he heard this, Pilgrim said, “You may be right! Sit and wait here. Let old monkey make another trip to Heaven.”

“What for?” asked Deng and Zhang, the two squires. Pilgrim said, “When old monkey gets there, he will not memorialise to the Jade Emperor. I’ll only go to the Red Aura Palace inside the South Heaven Gate and ask Mars, the Star of Fiery Virtue, to come here and start a fire to burn up that fiend. Perhaps the fillet, too, will be reduced to ashes, and then the demon will be arrested. First, we’ll be able to recover your weapons for you to take back to Heaven, and second, we’ll rescue my master from his ordeal.” When the prince heard these words, he was delighted and said, “No need for further delay. Let the Great Sage go and come back quickly. All of us will wait for you here.”

Mounting the auspicious luminosity, Pilgrim again went before the South Heaven Gate. Virūpākṣa and the four marshals met him, saying, “Why has the Great Sage come here again?” Pilgrim said, “Deity-King Li told the prince to fight but they only did battle once when his weapons were snatched away by that demon king. Now I want to go to the Red Aura Palace and request assistance from the Star of Fiery Virtue.” Not daring to detain him, the four marshals permitted him to enter the gate. When he reached the Red Aura Palace, the deities of the Fire Department went inside to make the report: “Sun Wukong wishes to see our lord.” The Third Pneuma of the South, the Star of Fiery Virtue, at once straightened his clothes and went out of his gates to meet his visitor. Then he said, “Yesterday Kehan Bureau inspected this humble palace but there’s no one here who longs for the world.”

“I know that,” said Pilgrim, “but Deity-King Li and the prince have lost their first battle and their weapons. I came especially to ask you to give us some help.” The Star said, “Nāṭa happens to be the great god presiding over the Grand Assembly of Three Platforms.<sup>7</sup> When he embarked on his official career, he once subdued the demons of ninety-six caves. If he with his vast magic powers could not do the job, how could this humble deity hope to assist you?” Pilgrim said, “I discussed the matter with Deity-King Li, and both of us thought that the most effective elements between Heaven and

Earth are water and fire. That fiend has a fillet most capable of sucking away the possessions of others. We've no idea what sort of treasure it is. Since we know however, that fire can destroy virtually everything, I've come to ask you to go to the Region Below and start a fire to burn up the demon and save my master from this one ordeal."

When he heard this, the Star of Fiery Virtue immediately called up the divine soldiers of his department and went with Pilgrim to the south slope of the Golden Helmet Mountain. After they greeted the Deity-King and the thunder squires, the Deity-King said, "Great Sage Sun, you must go again to provoke that fellow to come out. Let me fight with him; when he takes out his fillet, I'll move out of the way and ask Fiery Virtue to burn him."

"Exactly," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "I'll go with you." They left to provoke battle while Fiery Virtue stood on the tall peak with the prince and the two thunder squires.

When he reached the entrance of the cave, the Great Sage shouted: "Open the door! Return my master quickly!" The little fiends again hurried inside to report: "Sun Wukong is here once more!" The demon led his troops out of the cave to say to Pilgrim, "You brazen ape! What sort of help have you acquired this time?" From this side the Pagoda Bearer Deity-King stepped forward, crying, "Lawless demon! You recognise me?"

"Deity-King Li," said the demon king with a laugh, "you want to exact vengeance for your son, I suppose, and you want to recover your weapons?"

"For one thing I want to exact vengeance," said the Deity-King, "and for another I want to arrest you so that we can rescue the Tang Monk. Don't run away! Have a taste of my scimitar!"

Stepping aside to dodge the blow, the fiendish creature lifted his long lance and turned to meet his opponent. *In front of the cave the two of them had quite a battle!* Look at the Deity-King's scimitar slashing; the fiend's lance upraised; the scimitar slashes and frosty light emits bright flames; the lance rises and the will to fight pierces doleful clouds. 1 is the fiendish creature reared in the Golden Helmet Mountain; 1 is the deity sent from the Divine Mists Hall. That 1 for mocking Chan nature unleashes his power; this 1 shows the great relation to lift the master's ordeal. Using magic the Deity-King lets fly sand and stone; striving to win the fiend sprays mud and dirt. Spraying dirt can darken Heaven and Earth; flying sand may becloud rivers and seas. The 2 work hard to make a merit because the Tang Monk salutes the World-Honoured 1. When the Great Sage Sun saw the 2 of them had begun to fight, he turned at once and leaped up to the tall summit and said to the Star of Fiery Virtue, "Take care, Third Pnuma!" Look at them! The demon fought the Deity-King for some time and in the heat of the battle, he again took out the fillet. When the Deity-King saw it, he at once turned his auspicious luminosity around and fled in defeat. On the tall summit the Star of Fiery Virtue quickly gave the command for the various gods of his department to start the fire. *It's some fire, all right! Marvellous!* The classic says:

*The South's the spirit of fire.*

*A few tiny sparks can burn up 10000 acres for the power of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pnuma can change into 100-point fire. Now there are fire lances, fire scimitars, fire bows, and fire arrows – such the gods of sundry bureaus use in different fashions. See in mid-air fire crows flying and cawing; and all over the mount fire steeds swiftly galloping. Red rats in pairs – fire dragons in 2s – red rats in pairs throw out mighty flames and 10000 miles are reddened; fire dragons in 2s belch thick smoke and every corner turns black. Fire carts are pushed out; fire gourds are opened. Fire banners wave on a sky full of mists; fire rods stir up an earth full of blaze. Why speak of Ning Qi<sup>9</sup> whipping the ox?*

This is fiercer than Mr. Zhou at Red Cliff. <sup>9</sup>This is a Heaven, not a worldly fire – truly awesome. Cracking and roaring it's a holocaust. When the demon saw the fire coming, he was not in the least afraid. He tossed the fillet in the air and with a loud whoosh, it sucked away all those fire dragons, fire horses, fire crows, fire rats, fire bows, and fire arrows. Then he turned toward his cave and went back in triumph. The only thing left in the Star of Fiery Virtue's clutch was a banner that he used to recall all his warriors to join the Deity-King and his followers. As they sat down in the south slope of the mountain, the Star said to Pilgrim, "O Great Sage, truly one seldom sees a vicious demon like this one! Now I've lost my fire gear. What'll I do?"

"No need to grumble," said Pilgrim with a smile. "All of you, please take a seat for a while. Old monkey will make another trip."

"Where are you going this time?" asked the Deity-King, and Pilgrim said, "If that fiendish creature is not afraid of fire, he must be afraid of water. The proverb says, 'Water can overcome fire.' Let old monkey go to the Northern Heaven Gate and ask the Star of Watery Virtue to let loose his water and flood the cave. When that demon king is drowned, I'll get back your possessions."

"Though this is a good plan," said the Deity-King, "I fear that your master, too, will be drowned."

"Don't worry," said Pilgrim. "If my master is drowned, I've a way to revive him. But if I cause you all any further inconvenience, it'll be improper."

"In that case," said Fiery Virtue, "please go! Please go!"

Dear Great Sage! Again he mounted the cloud somersault and went before the North Heaven Gate where he ran at once into the Deity-King Vaiśravaṇa. "Where is the Great Sage Sun going?" asked the Deity-King, saluting. Pilgrim said, "I must enter the Dark Vastness Palace and see the Star of Watery Virtue on a certain matter. What are *you* doing here?" Vaiśravaṇa replied, "Today happens to be my turn to patrol the gate." As they spoke, the four grand marshals – Pang, Liu, Gou, and Bi – all came forward to greet Pilgrim and invited him to have tea with them. "Don't trouble yourselves!" said Pilgrim. "My affair's most urgent." Taking leave of the deities, he went straight up to the Dark Vastness Palace and asked the deities of the water department to announce him. When the Star of Watery Virtue heard the announcement that the Great Sage Sun Wukong had arrived, he at once commanded that the four seas, the five lakes, the eight rivers, the four great rivers, the three mighty streams, and the nine tributaries be thoroughly searched. The dragon kings at these places were also asked to retire. He then straightened out his clothes to walk out of the palace door to greet his visitor. As they walked back into the palace, the Star said, "Yesterday, Kehan Bureau came to inspect our humble palace, for he feared that some god in this department might have longed for the world. We're still making a thorough investigation of the gods of rivers and seas, and it's not finished yet."

"That demon king isn't a god of the rivers," said Pilgrim, "but a much more powerful spirit. At first the Jade Emperor was kind enough to send Deity-King Li, his son, and two thunder squires to try to arrest him down below. He came up with his fillet and six divine weapons were sucked away. Old monkey had no other choice but to go to the Red Aura Palace and ask the Star of Fiery Virtue to start a fire with the various gods of his department. Once more, the fillet sucked away the fire dragons, the fire horses, and the like. I thought that if this thing was not afraid of fire, it had to be afraid of water. I've come, therefore, especially to ask the Star to unleash your water power, capture that monster-spirit for us, and recover the weapons for the Heaven warriors. The ordeal of my master will also be lifted."

When Watery Virtue heard this, he at once gave this order to the Divine King Water Lord of the Yellow River: "Follow the Great Sage and give him assistance." Taking out a small white jade chalice from his sleeve, Water Lord said, "I've something here to hold water."

"Look at that!" said Pilgrim. "How much can this small chalice hold? How could it drown the demon?"

"To tell you the truth, Great Sage," said Water Lord, "this chalice of mine contains the water of the Yellow River. Half a chalice means half a river, and one whole chalice will hold an entire river." Delighted, Pilgrim said, "Half a chalice is quite enough!" He took leave of Watery Virtue at once and slipped away from the Heaven arches with the Yellow River God.

After he had bailed out half of the Yellow River's water with his chalice, Water Lord followed the Great Sage to the Golden Helmet Mountain where they met the Deity-King, the prince, the thunder squires, and Fiery Virtue. "No need for going into the details," said Pilgrim. "Just let Water Lord follow me there and let me command the fiend to open the door. Don't wait for him to come out. You just pour the water into the cave and the whole nest of that fiend will be drowned. I'll go and fish out the corpse of my master, and there'll be lots of time to revive him." Water Lord agreed and walked right behind Pilgrim who went around the slope to go up to the cave entrance. "Fiend, open the door!" he cried. Those little fiends standing guard at the door recognised that it was the voice of the Great Sage Sun and they hurried inside to report: "Sun Wukong's here again."

When the demon heard this, he picked up his treasure and his long lance and began to walk out. The stone door opened with a crash and Water Lord immediately emptied the content of his white jade chalice toward the inside of the cave. When he saw the water rushing in, the fiend dropped his long lance and took out the fillet, holding it high at the second door. Not only was the water blocked right there but it reversed its course and gushed back out of the cave. So startled was the Great Sage Sun that he somersaulted immediately into the air and, together with Water Lord, leaped up to the tallest peak. The other deities also mounted the clouds to follow them; they all stood on the peak to watch the water swelling to tremendous height and force. Marvellous water! Truly *1 spoonful of it will make it unfathomable*; <sup>10</sup>for when it's propelled by divine force, it benefits all things and flows to swell a hundred streams. You hear its loud splashes rocking the valley; see its giant crest surging up to Heaven. Its mighty roar seems like thunder rumbling; violent waves seem like summit-snow swirling. Billows, a thousand feet tall, cover the roadways; ripples, 10000-layered, surge over the peaks. Gurgling, like spilled jade; <sup>11</sup>clanging, like plucked strings. Hitting the rocks, it foams like chips of jade tossed high; rounding the curves, it breaks out in eddies unending. It flows through the lowlands and depressions, filling up brooklets and joining both their reaches. Alarmed by what he saw, Pilgrim said, "That's bad! The water's flooding the rice fields of people everywhere but it's not even touched the inside of his cave. What'll we do?"

He asked Water Lord to retrieve the water at once but Water Lord said, "Your humble deity only knows how to let loose the water but he doesn't know how to retrieve it." As the proverb says, "Water thrown out can't be retrieved." Ah!

Fortunately, that mountain was rather tall and rugged, so that all the water flowed swiftly downward. In a moment, it drained into all the brooks and ravines and disappeared. A few little fiends leaped out of the cave afterwards, and when they saw that the water had receded, they began to play there happily – shouting and hollering, boxing with their fists, and wielding their rods and lances. "So this water never reached the inside of the cave," said the Deity-King, "and all our efforts have been vain!" Pilgrim could not restrain the anger flaring up in his heart; wielding both his fists, he dashed up to the door of the demon and shouted: "Don't run away! Watch out for a beating!" These several little fiends were so terrified that they all dropped their rods and lances to dash into the cave. Trembling all over, they made the report: "Great King, it's terrible! He's going to give us a beating!" Holding high his long lance, the demon king went out of the door to meet his adversary, saying, "This brazen ape's such a rascal! You've lost to me several times and not even your water or fire can touch me. Why's it that you've still come to give up your life?"

"My son's twisting the facts!" said Pilgrim. "I don't know whether I'm the one who'll give up my life or whether you're the one! Come over here and have a taste of your old Grandpa's fists!"

"This monkey's desperately forcing the issue!" said the demon with a chuckle. "I'm using the lance but he's using only his fists. That pair of hands is nothing but skin and bones and no bigger than walnut pits! How'd you call them *pounders*? All right! All right! I'll put down my lance and box with you."

Laughing, Pilgrim replied, "That's the way to speak! Come up here!"

Hitching up his clothes and walking forward, the fiend assumed a boxing posture; his two fists upraised looked truly like 2 iron sledge hammers. Great Sage also loosened his legs at once and moved his body to attack; right before the cave entrance, he began to box with the demon king. This was quite a fight! Aha! *The 4 limbs are stretched out; the double-kicking feet fly up. They pound the ribs and chests; stab at galls and hearts. "The Mortal Pointing the Way; "12*Laotz Riding the Crane; a Hungry Tiger Pouncing on the Prey" is most hurtful; "A Dragon Playing with Water" is quite vicious. The demon king uses a "Serpent Turning Around"; the Great Sage employs a "Deer Letting Loose its Horns." *The dragon plunges to Earth with heels upturned; the wrist twists around to seize Heaven's bag. A green lion's open-mouthed lunge; a carp's snapped-back flip. Sprinkling flowers over the head; tying a rope around the waist; a fan moving with the wind; the rain driving down the flowers. The monster-spirit then uses the "Guanyin Palm," and Pilgrim counters with the "Arhat Feet." The long punch, stretching, is slacker, of course. How could it compare with the short, sharp jabs?*

*The 2 of them fought for many rounds – none was the stronger for they're evenly matched.* As the 2 of them boxed in front of the cave entrance, those standing high on the peak were so thrilled by the spectacle that Deity-King Li shouted bravos and the Star of Fiery Virtue clapped his hands in acclaim. Then the two thunder squires and Prince Nataḷa led the other deities in rushing forward and tried to help their colleague. On the other side, the little monsters immediately surged forward also to cover their master, waving banners and beating drums, wielding swords and brandishing scimitars. When the Great Sage saw that the situation might turn against him, he yanked off a handful of hairs from his own body and tossed them into the air, crying, "Change!" At once they changed into some fifty little monkeys who swarmed all over the demon – grabbing his legs, tugging at his torso, gouging his eyes, and pulling at his hair. The fiendish creature became so alarmed that he immediately took out his fillet. When the Great Sage and his companions saw that object, they mounted the clouds at once and fled toward the tall summit. Tossing the fillet up into the air, the fiend changed those fifty monkeys back into their true forms and then they were sucked away again with a loud whoosh. After he had gained this victory, the fiend led his troops back to his cave, closed the door, and celebrated. "The Great Sage Sun is still a marvellous fighter!" said the prince. "The way you box, it's truly like adding flowers to the embroidery and the way you use your body-division magic is indeed the display of nobility before others."

"As you watched from afar," said Pilgrim, smiling, "how did the abilities of the fiend compare with old monkey's?"

"His punches were slack," said Deity-King Li, "and his kicks were slow; he certainly could not match the Great Sage for his speed and tightness. He was quite flustered already by the sight of our arrival and when he saw your magic of body-division, he grew even more desperate and resorted to his fillet."

"It's simple to deal with the demon king," said Pilgrim, "but it's difficult to overcome that fillet."

Both Fiery Virtue and Water Lord said together, "If we want to win, we must acquire his treasure first before we try to arrest him."

"How could we acquire his treasure," asked Pilgrim, "unless we try to steal it?"

"If we want to practice the ritual of stealing," said a thunder squire, chuckling, "there is no one more able than the Great Sage. Remember that year when you caused great havoc in Heaven, how you stole imperial juice, mortal peaches, dragon's liver, phoenix's marrow, and the elixir of Laozi? What a talent that was! Today is the time to put that to use again."

"Thanks for the compliment!" said Pilgrim. "Thanks for the compliment! If that's what you think we'd do, take a seat here and let old monkey go to make some investigation."

Dear Great Sage! He leaped down from the peak and crept up to the cave entrance; with one shake of his body he changed himself into a tiny fly. Truly graceful! Look at him! *His wings thin as skin of bamboo; a body small like a flower's heart. His arms and his legs just thicker than hairs; beady eyes both shining and bright. Good at chasing scent and fragrance, he flies swiftly riding the wind. His*

*frame barely pulls down the steelyard weight; so cute he's even of some use.* <sup>13</sup>Ever so lightly he flew up to the door and crawled inside through a crack. There he found many fiends, young and old; some were reciting and dancing while others stood in rows on both sides. Sitting high on his throne was the old demon king, and before him were placed dishes of serpent meat, venison, bear-paw, camel-hump, mountain vegetables, and fruits. There were juice pots made of blue porcelain, from which came fragrant goat's milk and coconut juice. In big bowlfuls he and his other fiends were drinking with abandon. Dropping down into the crowd of little fiends, Pilgrim at once changed into a badger-head spirit and inched his way toward the throne of the demon king. He looked everywhere for a long time but he could not discover where the treasure was placed. Dashing behind the throne, he found the fire dragons and fire horses hung up high in the rear hall, all whining and neighing. As he raised his head, he suddenly saw his own golden-hooped rod leaning against the east wall. So delighted was he by this discovery that he even forgot about changing into his true form before running forward to seize his iron rod. Only after he had picked it up did he reveal his original form and fought his way out with his rod. All those fiends were terrified while the old demon king was caught completely off guard. Thus Pilgrim was able to push down three monsters on one side and bring down 2 on the other; opening up a bloody path, he went directly out of the cave. So it is that *the demon so arrogant, lets down his guard; the lordly staff returns to the rightful man.*

052

Wukong greatly disturbed the Golden Helmet Cave; Siddhartha reveals in secret the true master

The Great Sage Sun who recovered his golden-hooped rod and fought his way out of the door. He was filled with delight as he leaped up to the tall summit to face the various gods. "How did you do this time?" asked the Deity-King Li.

"By his transformation," said Pilgrim, "old monkey managed to get inside the cave. That fiend and his subordinates were all reciting and dancing, drinking their victory juice. I didn't succeed in detecting where he put his treasure but when I went to the rear of the cave, I heard horses neighing and dragons whining and I knew that they had to be the belongings of the fire department. The golden-hooped rod was leaning against the east wall; old monkey picked it up and fought his way out."

"You got your treasure," said the deities, "but when could we get back ours?"

"It's easy! It's easy!" said Pilgrim. "When I've this iron rod, I'll strike him down and recover your treasures for you, no matter what." Hardly had he finished speaking when they heard a great din coming from below the mountain slope punctuated by the roll of drums and the sounding of gongs. The Bovine Great King was leading the various spirits to give chase to Pilgrim who shouted when he saw the throng approaching, "Good! Good! Good! This is exactly my wish! Have a seat, all of you and let old monkey go again to catch him." *Dear Great Sage!* Lifting high his iron rod, he met them head-on crying, "Brazen demon, where're you going? Watch my rod!"

Using his lance to parry the blow, the fiend scolded him: "You thievish ape! You're indeed ill-behaved! How dare you rob me in broad daylight?"

"You cursed beast!" said Pilgrim. "You don't know that you're about to die. You're the one who robbed us in broad daylight with your fillet. Which of these things really belongs to you? Don't run away. Have a taste of your Venerable Dad's rod!"

*What a great battle this was! The Great Sage displays his might; the demon's no longer tame. The 2 wage a fierce contest for neither's willing to quit. This one's iron rod seems like a dragon's tail; that 1's long lance resembles a python's head. From this 1, the strokes of the rod roar like the wind; from that 1, the blows of the lance flow like strong currents. See coloured mists close in to darken the peaks and auspicious clouds hover over the woods. The birds in the air all stop their wings; the beasts in the wilds all hide their heads. On the battlefield the little fiends cheer; on this side the Great Sage rouses himself. His one iron rod that none can withstand has fought throughout the West's 10000 miles. But that long lance is truthfully his match ere ruling Golden Helmet with all success. They meet this time and they will not leave in peace; till 1 obtains a victory they will never cease.* For 3 hours the demon king fought with the Great Sage Sun but no decision could be reached. Soon it was getting dark. Using the lance to hold back the rod, the demon said, "Wukong, you stop now. When it's dark everywhere, it's no time to fight. Let's each of us take some rest. We'll resume our contest tomorrow morning."

"Shut up, you lawless beast!" scolded Pilgrim. "Old monkey's just getting inspired! Who cares if it's getting late! I'm determined to find out which of us is better." With a shout however, the fiend turned and fled, leading all those fiends and their arms back into the cave, after which they had the door tightly shut.

As the Great Sage walked back to the peak with his rod trailing behind him, the Heaven deities all congratulated him with these words: "Truly a mighty power Equal to Heaven! What boundless, what limitless powers!"

"Thanks for the compliments! Thanks for the compliments!" said Pilgrim. "We've not exaggerated in our praise," said Deity-King Li, drawing near. "You're indeed quite a man! The way you fought just now reminded us of the time when you defied the cosmic nets."

"Let's not revive old gossip," said Pilgrim. "After he had fought with old monkey all this while, that fiend must be tired. I'll not complain of fatigue; while all of you sit here and relax, I want to go into the cave to find out where he has hidden that fillet of his. I'm determined to steal it and to catch the fiend. Then we can find your weapons so that you all may return to Heaven."

"It's getting late," said the prince. "Why not rest for the night and go there tomorrow morning?"

Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Our little boy's still ignorant of the ways of the world! Who's ever seen a thief starting something in daytime? To sneak inside, one must go during the night, undetected; that's how this business's done!"

Both Fiery Virtue and 1 of the thunder squires said, "Talk no more, Third Prince. This sort of thing may be foreign to us but the Great Sage's an expert. He's to make use of this time for the demon's tired and his guard may be down during the night. Let the Great Sage go now. Go quickly!"

*Dear Great Sage!* Grinning broadly, he put away his iron rod and leaped down from the tall summit to go once more before the cave. He shook his body once and immediately changed into a small cricket. Truly he has *hard mouth, long whiskers, and black skin with keen eyes and legs forked like branches. Midst bright moon and clear breeze he chirps on the wall like someone speaking in silent night. He weeps when dew saddens prospect, a proud voice, though halting and faint. The window's pensive guest dreads hearing him, this lodger beneath the steps or the bed.* <sup>1</sup>Stretching forth his long legs, he jumped up to the door with three or four leaps and crawled inside through a crack. He squatted near the foot of the wall and, by the light of lamps and torches inside, looked carefully around. The various fiends, young and old, were just wolfing down their dinners. Pilgrim creaked and cricked for a while, and soon after, the fiends finished eating and put away their utensils. After laying out their bedding, all the fiends retired. Not until the time of the first watch did Pilgrim go to the rear chamber where he heard the old demon give this command: "All the little ones guarding the doors should sleep lightly. I fear that Sun Wukong may change into something to come in here to steal again."

Those who were taking turns to stand watch began to beat their rattles or ring their bells. *Great Sage however, was most eager to do what he came to do!* After he crawled into the bedroom, he found a stone bed, on both sides of which were several mountain ghosts or tree spirits all powdered and rouged. They were making the bed and helping the old demon to retire; some were unlacing his boots while others were untying his robe. After the demon king took off his clothes, at once the fillet – all ghostly white – could be seen. It was attached to his left shoulder like an armlet made of a string of pearls. Look at him! Instead of taking the fillet off, he pushed it up a couple of times until it was snugly clamped to his shoulder. Only then did he lie down to sleep. With one shake of his body again, Pilgrim changed into a flea with yellow skin. Leaping onto the stone bed and crawling inside his covers, he crept up to the left shoulder of the fiend and gave him a sturdy bite. The fiend was so stung by it that he turned over, shouting, "These slaves! They ought to be beaten more often! They didn't shake the covers, nor did they brush the bedding. Now I've been bitten by I don't know what!" He gave his fillet two further shoves before dozing off once more. Crawling above the fillet, Pilgrim gave him another bite. Unable to sleep, the fiend sat up, yelling, "I'm itching to death!"

When Pilgrim saw how carefully he guarded the fillet, refusing to let it leave his body for even a moment, Pilgrim knew that he would be unable to steal it. He leaped down from the bed, changed once more into a cricket, and left the bedroom to go to the rear where he again heard dragons whining and horses neighing. Behind two doors tightly locked fire dragons and fire horses all hung inside. Pilgrim changed back to his original form as he walked up to the door to exercise his lock-opening magic. He recited a spell and gave the padlock a wipe: immediately the double patches snapped open. Pushing open the doors, he walked into a room so brightly lit by fire equipment that it seemed like daylight. Several weapons were seen leaning against the east and the west walls: they were the fiend-slashing scimitar of the prince, the fire bows and fire arrows of Fiery Virtue, and the like. In the glow of the light, Pilgrim looked carefully around and saw on top of a stone table behind the door a small basket woven of bamboo. Inside was placed a bunch of hairs. Filled with delight, the Great Sage picked up the hairs and blew on them two mouthfuls of hot air, crying, "Change!" They changed at once into forty or fifty little monkeys who were then told to pick up the scimitar, the sword, the club, the wheel, together with the bows, the arrows, the lances, the carts, the gourds, the fire crows, the fire rats, and the fire horses – all those things sucked away by the fillet. After they had mounted the fire dragons, they started a huge blaze that burned outward from deep inside the cave. All you'd hear were the snapping and cracking – bing-bing, bang-bang – as if thunderbolts or fire cannons were let loose inside. Those monster-spirits, young and old, were utterly terrified; in a stupor, they hugged their blankets or covered their heads, some screaming, and some weeping. None of them knew which way to run and more than half of them were burned to death by the fire. The Handsome Monkey King thus returned to his camp in triumph at about the hour of the third watch. We now tell you about Deity-King Li and his companions on the tall summit. They suddenly saw a bright flare of lights rushing toward them, and then they discovered Pilgrim riding on a dragon and shouting commands to a team of little monkeys as they ascended the mountain. After reaching the peak, he yelled: "Come and get your weapons! Come and get your weapons!"

Fiery Virtue and Nata immediately answered his call while Pilgrim shook his body to retrieve his hairs. Prince Nata took back his six weapons, and Fiery Virtue told his subordinates to put away the fire dragons and other equipment. All of them were full of smiles and praises for Pilgrim. The Golden Helmet Cave where flames were still shooting up everywhere. The Bovine Great King was scared out of his wits; dashing out of his room, he held his fillet up high with both hands. He pushed it toward the fire this way and that way, and it immediately went out. Though the air was filled with flame and smoke, they all subsided after he and his treasure had run through the entire cave. He tried to rescue the other fiends but over half of them had been burned to death. Those who survived, male and female, did not number a hundred. Then he went to inspect the place where he had hidden the weapons but not a single item could be found. Finally, he reached the rear of the cave where he saw 8 Rules, Sand-monk, and the elder still securely bound. The white dragon horse was tied to the stall, and even the load of luggage remained in the room. Angriily, the demon said, "I wonder which of the little fiends was so careless that he started the fire and brought all this on us!"

"Great King," one of the attendants by his side said, "This fire could not have been started by any one of our own. It had to be the work of someone intent on raiding our camp; after he had released the equipment of the fire department, he also stole the divine weapons." Only then did the old demon realise what had happened. "There is *no* one else!" he said. "It has to be that thief, Sun Wukong! No wonder I'd such a hard time when I tried to sleep just now! That larcenous ape must have gotten in here by means of transformation and gave my shoulder a couple of bites. Undoubtedly he wanted to steal my treasure but when he saw how tightly it was attached to my body, he could not do it. That was the reason he stole the other weapons instead and let loose the fire dragons. How vicious of him! He wanted to burn me to death! Oh thievish ape! You've made vain use of your trickery! When I've this treasure on me, I can't be drowned even when I plunge into the ocean, nor can I be burned if I leap into a pool of fire. But when I catch you, thief, this time, I'm going to skin and cut you up alive. Only then will I be satisfied."

He spoke sullenly in this manner for a long time, and soon thereafter it was dawn. On the tall summit, the prince, holding his six weapons that had just been recovered, said to Pilgrim, "Great Sage, it's getting bright. Let's not wait any further. We'd make use of this opportunity when that demon's will to fight has been blunted by you. With the help of the fire department, let us go again to do battle with him. Most probably he'll be captured this time."

"You're right," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Let us unite and go have some fun!"

In high spirits and eager to fight, each of them went up to the cave entrance. "Lawless demon, come out!" bellowed Pilgrim. "Come and fight with old monkey!"

The 2 stone doors of the cave had been reduced to ashes the night before by the intense heat. At the moment, several little fiends by the entrance were just in the process of gathering up the ashes and sweeping the ground. When they saw the various sages approach, they were so terrified that they abandoned their brooms and ash forks and dashed inside to report: "Sun Wukong's led many gods to provoke battle outside our door!"

So astounded was he by this report that the bovine fiend gnashed his teeth and rolled his ring-like eyes. He picked up his lance, treasure, and no sooner had he emerged from the door when he began to castigate his adversary saying, "You thievish ape! You camp-raider and arsonist! What skills do you've that you dare treat me so contemptuously?"

Smiling broadly, Pilgrim said, "You brazen fiend! If you want to know my skills, come up here and listen to my recital. *My skills were great since the time of my birth as my name's throughout the universe enlightened, I practiced the transcendent way; in days past came the means to eternal youth. I willed to salute at the place of the Heart<sup>2</sup> to seek with reverence the home of a sage. I learned how to change with endless power, taking as my playground the whole cosmos. At leisure I tamed tigers on the mount; when bored I subdued dragons in the sea. I claimed a throne at native Flower-Fruit, flaunting my strength in Water-Curtain Cave. A few times I lusted for Heaven's realm; ignorant, I robbed the Region Above. My royal name: Great Sage Equal to Heaven; I was called also Handsome Monkey King. When the Feast of Peaches was under way, I took offence for no invitation came. In secret I stole jade juice at Jasper Pool and drank it in stealth at the treasure tower. Dragon and phoenix organs I did taste; a hundred dainties I'd steal and eat. Millennial peaches I freely enjoyed, stuffing my guts with long-life drugs and pills. Strange things of Heaven I took piece by piece and rare goods from sage mansions bit by bit. When Jade Emperor learned what great skills I'd, he sent divine soldiers to the battlefield. I banished those fierce Nine Luminaries; and wounded the Five Quarters' Vicious Stars. All Heaven's warriors were no match of mine; a hundred thousand troops dared not meet me. Hard pressed, the Jade Emperor gave a decree: libation Stream's Little Sage then raised his sword. Seventy-two transformations we struggled through, each rousing his spirit, showing his might. Guanyin of South Sea came, too at length to lend them her help with willow and vase. Laozi then made use of his diamond snare to have me captured and brought up there to see, bound firmly, the Great Emperor Jade as judge and tribunal indicted me. They told God Powerful to*

cut me dead but sparks flew up when knives fell on my head. Since no means was found to put me to death, they sent me all shackled to Laozi's hall: a brazier watched by the Six Gods of Light, refined me till I became hard as steel. With vessel opened on day forty-ninth, I leaped out to work violence yet once more. When gods hid themselves and none withstood me, the sages agreed that God be called. Siddhartha's power's mighty indeed! His wisdom, truly vast and limitless! A somersault match waged upon his hand made a mountain press me, now no stronger. When the Emperor gave the Feast of Heaven's Peace, the West regained its name of Ultimate Bliss. Old monkey jailed for full five centuries didn't once taste a bit of tea or rice. But when Elder Gold Cicada came to earth, the East sent him to go to God's home to fetch true scriptures for a noble state where the Great Tang ruler might save the dead. Guanyin taught me to submit to the Good and let faith held firmly my wildness check. Free of my ordeal at that mountain root, I now go west to fetch the scripture texts. Lawless demon, cease your fox-like cunning! Return my Tang Monk, salute Religion King!"

When he heard these words, he pointed at Pilgrim and cried, "So, you're the big thief who robbed Heaven! Don't run away! Swallow my lance!" The Great Sage met him with the rod and the two of them began to fight. On this side Prince Nata became angry and the Star of Fiery Virtue grew vicious: they hurled those six divine weapons together with the fire equipment at the demon. The Great Sage Sun fought even more fiercely as the thunder squires took up their thunderbolts and the Deity-King his scimitar to rush at their enemy. Smiling scornfully, the demon calmly took out from his sleeve his treasure and tossed it in the air, crying, "Hit!" With a loud whoosh, the six divine weapons, the fire equipment, the thunderbolts, the scimitar of the Deity-King, and the rod of Pilgrim were all snatched away. Once again, the deities and the Great Sage Sun were empty-handed. After the demon returned in triumph to his cave, he gave this order: "Little ones, gather rocks and boulders to rebuild our doors, and tidy up our rooms and hallways. When we finish our work, we'll slaughter the Tang Monk and his companions to thank the Earth. Then all of us can disperse the blessing and enjoy."

The little fiends all obeyed. The Deity-King Li led the rest of the gods back to the tall summit. Fiery Virtue then began to rail at Nata for being too impulsive while the thunder squires blamed the Deity-King for acting too recklessly. Water Lord however, stood to one side and sulked. When Pilgrim saw how distraught they looked, he had little alternative but to appear cheerful and said to them, forcing a smile, "Please don't be so distressed, all of you. After all, the ancient proverb says, 'Victory or defeat is a common thing for the soldier.' If we want to consider the demon's fighting skill, it's no more than so-so. The reason he can cause so much harm is that fillet in his possession that has again sucked away all our weapons. Nonetheless, try to relax. Let old monkey go and see if he can find out something more about his pedigree."

"When you first presented your memorial to the Jade Emperor," said the prince, "there's a thorough search made throughout the celestial realm but not a trace of this monster could be found. Now where are you going to make further investigation?" Pilgrim replied, "Come to think of it, the religion power of God is boundless. I'll go now to the Western Heaven to question our God Siddhartha; I'll ask him to scan with his eye of wisdom the four great continents of Earth and see where this fiend was born and raised. I want to learn what sort of treasure his fillet is, and no matter what, I'm determined to have him arrested. Only then will all of you be avenged and have a happy trip back to Heaven."

"If that's your intention," said the gods, "don't delay. Go quickly! Go quickly!"

Dear Pilgrim! He said he would go and at once he mounted his cloud-somersault. Instantly he arrived at the Spirit Mountain. Lowering his auspicious luminosity, he looked everywhere. *Marvellous place! The noble Mount Spirit, fine, pure cloud-layers; a divine summit touching jade-green sky. A great town seen in Western Heaven, its form, its air surpassing even China's. The primal breath flows to widen Heaven and Earth; strong wind scatters a platform full of flowers.* <sup>3</sup>*Long notes of bells and stones are often heard and clear, loud scripture recitations. See, too, lay-sisters lecturing beneath green pines and Arhats walking among jade-like cedars. White cranes with feelings come to Vulture Peak; blue phoenixes wish to stand by quiet arbours. Black apes in pairs hold up mortal fruits; aged deer in 2s present purple blooms. Rare birds call often like some tale-telling, flowers too strange, and fair to have names. The ranges turn and circle fold upon fold; the old path meanders though it was level. A place where pure void of spirit's the norm – God's solemn and great awakened form.* As Pilgrim enjoyed the sight of the mountain scenery, he heard someone calling him: "Sun Wukong, where did you come from? Where're you going?"

He turned quickly and found that it was the Honoured Lady Beggar. "The Great Sage greeted her and said, 'I've a matter that requires an audience with Siddhartha.'

"You rascal!" said Lady Beggar, "If you want to see Siddhartha, why don't you ascend the treasure temple? Why stay here to look at the mountain?"

"This is the first time I've been to this noble region," replied Pilgrim, "and that's why I'm acting boldly."

"Follow me quickly," said Lady Beggar, and Pilgrim ran after her up to the gate of the Thunderclap Monastery where their way was barred by the heroic figures of the Eight Great Diamond Guardians.<sup>5</sup>

"Wukong," said Lady Beggar, "wait here for a moment and let me announce your arrival." Pilgrim had no choice but to wait outside the gate. Going before a god, Lady Beggar pressed her palms before her and said, "Sun Wukong needs to have an audience with Siddhartha." Whereupon Siddhartha commanded him to enter, and only then did the diamond guardians allow him to pass.

After Pilgrim touched his head to the ground, Siddhartha asked, "Wukong, I heard previously that after the Honoured One Guanyin had freed you, you made submission to Religion and agreed to accompany the Tang Monk to seek scriptures here. Why have you come all by yourself? What is the matter?" Again touching his head to the ground, Pilgrim said, "Let me report this to our God. Since your disciple embraced the faith, he has followed the master from the Tang court in his journey west. We reached the Golden Helmet Cave of the Golden Helmet Mountain where we ran into an evil demon who had the name of Bovine Great King. He had such vast magic powers that he abducted my master and brothers into his cave. Your disciple demanded their return but he had no good will at all and we fought it out. My iron rod was snatched away by a ghostly white fillet of his. As I suspected that he might be some celestial warrior who longed for the world, I went to the Region Above to investigate. The Jade Emperor was kind enough to lend me the assistance of the dad-and-son team of Deity-King Li, only to have him rob the prince of his six weapons. Then I asked the Star of Fiery Virtue to bum him with fire but he took the fire equipment also. Next we asked the Star of Watery Virtue to drown him with water but we'd not even touch a single hair of his. After your disciple spent enormous energy to steal back the iron rod and other things, we went again to provoke battle. Once again his fillet sucked away all our weapons, and we're powerless to subdue him. That's why I've this special request for our God, in his great compassion, to survey the world and find out what is the true origin of this creature. I'll then be able to capture his kin or neighbour so that it'll facilitate the arrest of the demon and the rescue of my master. All of us then will be able to salute with hands pressed to the forehead and utter sincerity to seek the right fruit."

After Siddhartha heard this, he trained his eyes of wisdom to peer into the distance and immediately he had knowledge of the whole affair. "Though I've learned the identity of that fiendish creature," he said to Pilgrim, "I can't reveal it to you because you've such a loose, apish tongue. If somehow you pass on the fact that it was I who disclosed his identity, he would not fight with you but he would start a quarrel up here in Spirit Mountain. That would cause me a lot of trouble. Let me give you the assistance of my religion power instead to help you capture him." Saluting deeply again, Pilgrim thanked him and said, "What sort of religion power will you bestow on me?" Siddhartha immediately ordered the 18 *Arhats* to open the treasury and take out eighteen grains of golden cinnabar sand to assist Wukong. "What will this golden cinnabar sand do?" asked Pilgrim. "Go before the cave," said Siddhartha, "and ask the demon for a contest. Entice him to come out and the *Arhats* will at once release the sand that will entrap him. Since he'll be unable to move his body or raise his feet, you can beat him up at will."

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" cried Pilgrim, laughing. "Bring them out quickly!"

Not daring to delay, the *Arhats* at once took out the golden cinnabar sand and walked out of the gate. After Pilgrim thanked Siddhartha again, he ran after the crowd and found there were only sixteen *Arhats*. "What sort of a place's this," yelled Pilgrim, "that you're taking bribes and releasing prisoners?"

"Who is taking bribes and releasing prisoners?" asked the *Arhats*.

Pilgrim said, "Originally eighteen of you're sent. Why's it that there're only sixteen now?"

Hardly had he finished speaking when Dragon-Subduer and Tiger-Tamer, the 2 Honoured 1s walked out from inside. "Wukong," they said, "how'd you be so mischievous? The two of us remained behind because Siddhartha had further instructions for us."

"That's a wretched way to take bribes!" said Pilgrim. "If I waited even a moment in hollering, you'd probably not come out."

Laughing uproariously, the *Arhats* mounted the auspicious clouds. In a moment, they arrived at the Golden Helmet Mountain where they were met by Deity-King Li leading the rest of the deities. "No need to go into the details," said 1 of the *Arhats*. "Go quickly and ask him to come out."

Holding his fists high, the Great Sage went before the cave entrance and shouted, "Blubbery fiend! Come out quickly and try your hands with your Grandpa Sun."

Again those little fiends dashed inside to make the report. Infuriated, the demon king said, "This thievish ape! I wonder whom he's invited to come make a nuisance here!"

"There's no other warrior," said the little fiends, "he's all by himself."

"I've already taken away his rod," said the demon king. "How's it that he shows up all by himself again? Could it be that he wants to box some more?" Picking up his treasure and his lance, he ordered the little fiends to move away the boulders and leaped out of the cave. "Larcenous ape!" he scolded. "For several times you've not been able to gain the upper hand and that'd make you stay away. Why're you here again making noises?"

Pilgrim said, "This brazen demon doesn't know good or evil! If you don't want your Grandpa to show up at your door, you make submission, apologise, send out my master, and brothers. Then I'll spare you."

"Those three monks of yours," said the fiend, "have been scrubbed clean. Soon they'll be slaughtered. And you're still making a fuss? Go away!" When Pilgrim heard the word *slaughter*, fire leaped up to his cheeks. Unable to suppress the anger of his heart, he wielded his fists and attacked the demon with hooks and jabs. Spreading out his long lance, the fiend turned to meet him. Pilgrim jumped this way and that to deceive the monster. Not knowing it was a trick, the demon left the entrance of the cave and gave chase toward the south. At once Pilgrim shouted for the *Arhats* to pour the golden cinnabar sand down on the demon. *Marvellous sand! Truly like fog and mist, it spreads out at 1\*; in great profusion it drops from afar. 1 mass of white blinding vision everywhere. A dark expanse flaring up to lead you astray. The working woodsman has lost his partner; the fairy youth picking herbs can't see his home. It drifts and soars like fine wheat-flour; some grains are coarse like sesame. The world seems opaque as the summits darken; the sun's hidden and the sky disappears. It's not quite the noise and dust at a horse's heels, nor the light fluffiness chasing a scented car; is this sand by nature a ruthless thing that can blot out the world to seize the fiend. Because a demon assails the right Way, the Arhats by Law release their power. Though your hand may hold a bright shiny pearl, soon the blown sand will your eyesight obscure.* When the demon saw that the flying sand was clouding up his vision, he lowered his head and discovered that his feet were already standing in three feet of the stuff. He was so horrified that he tried to jump upward; before he could even stand up properly the sand grew another foot. In desperation, the fiend tried to pull up his legs while taking out his fillet. Throwing it up into the air, he cried, "Hit!"

With a loud whoosh, the eighteen grains of golden cinnabar sand were sucked away. The demon then strode back to the cave. All of those *Arhats* with bare hands stopped their clouds while Pilgrim drew near and asked, "Why aren't you sending down the sand?"

"There's a sound just now," 1 of them said, "and instantly our golden cinnabar sand vanished."

"That little something's sucked them away again!" sighed Pilgrim with a laugh.

"If he's so hard to catch," said Deity-King Li to the rest, "how'd we ever arrest him? When'll we be able to return to Heaven? How'd we face the Emperor?"

On 1 side, Dragon Subduer and Tiger Tamer, the 2 *Arhats*, said, "Wukong, did you know why we delayed in coming out of the door just now?"

"Old monkey only feared that you're trying to find some pretence not to come," said Pilgrim. "I don't know any other explanation."

1 of the 2 *Arhats* replied, "Siddhartha told the two of us that the demon had vast magic powers. If we lost the golden cinnabar sand, he said, we'd ask Sun Wukong to search for his origin at the place of Laozi, the Tushita Palace of the Griefless Heaven. The demon would be caught with one stroke." When Pilgrim heard this, he said, "That's most despicable! Even Siddhartha is trying to hornswoggle old monkey! He should have told me right then and there, and there would have been no need for all of you to travel."

"If Siddhartha made such a clear revelation," said Deity-King Li, "let the Great Sage go up there quickly."

Dear Pilgrim! "I'm off!" he said, and at once he mounted the cloud somersault to enter the South Heaven Gate. There he was met by the four grand marshals who raised their folded hands to their chins to salute him, asking, "How's the affair of arresting that monster?" Answering them as he walked along, Pilgrim said, "It's unfinished! It's unfinished! But I'm on his trail now!" The four grand marshals dared not detain him and permitted him to walk inside the Heaven Gate. Going neither to the Hall of Divine Mists nor to the Dipper Palace, he went instead straight up to the Tushita Palace of the Griefless Heaven that was beyond the thirty-third Heaven. Two mortal youths were standing outside the palace. Without announcing who he was however, Pilgrim walked right inside the door, so startling the youths that they tugged at him, crying, "Who are you? Where are you going?" Only then did Pilgrim say, "I'm the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. I wish to see Laozi, Mr. Li."

"Why are you so rude?" asked one of the youths. "Stand here and let us announce you." But Pilgrim would have none of that. With a shout, he dashed inside and ran smack into Laozi who was just coming out. Saluting low hurriedly, Pilgrim said, "Venerable Sir, haven't seen you for a while."

"Why is this ape not going to seek scriptures?" said Laozi, chuckling. "What's he doing here?"

Pilgrim replied, "*Scripture-seeking – toil unending. My way's blocked: I came shuffling.*"

"If the road to the Western Heaven is blocked," said Laozi, "what has that got to do with me?"

Again Pilgrim said, "*Ah, Heaven West! Stop your protest! I find my trail: you I'll contest.*"

"This place of mine," said Laozi, "is an incomparable mortal palace. What sort of trail can you find?"

Eyes unblinking, Pilgrim went inside and looked left and right. He walked past several corridors and all at once he discovered a boy sound asleep by the corral. The green buffalo however, was not inside. “Venerable Sir,” said Pilgrim, “your buffalo has escaped! Your buffalo has escaped!”

“When did this cursed beast escape?” asked Laozi, highly astonished.

All that clamour woke up the boy who immediately went to his knees and said, “Dad, your disciple fell asleep. I don’t know when he escaped.”

“How’d you fall asleep, you rogue?” scolded Laozi.

The boy respected several times before he answered, “Your disciple picked up one pellet of elixir in the elixir chamber. I fell asleep as soon as I ate it.”

“It must be the Elixir of Seven Returns to the Fire that we made the other day. One pellet fell out and this rogue picked it up and ate it. Well, anyone who eats one of those pellets will sleep for a week. Because you fell asleep, no one looked after that cursed beast, and he took the opportunity to go to the Region Below. Today’s the seventh day.”

Immediately Laozi wanted to make an investigation to see if any treasure was stolen but Pilgrim said, “He’s no treasure except a fillet and it’s quite formidable.”

Laozi made a quick inventory; everything was there except the diamond snare. “This cursed beast stole my diamond snare!” said Laozi.

“So, that’s the treasure!” said Pilgrim. “It’s the same snare that hit me that time!<sup>6</sup> Now it’s going wild down below, sucking away who knows how many things.”

“Where’s the cursed beast now?” asked Laozi.

Pilgrim replied, “At the Golden Helmet Cave of the Golden Helmet Mountain. He caught my Tang Monk first and robbed me of my golden-hooped rod. When I asked the celestial soldiers to come help me, he also took away the divine weapons of the prince. When the Star of Fiery Virtue arrived, his equipment was also taken. Only Water Lord did not lose anything to him but his water could not drown the demon either. Finally, I asked Siddhartha to order the *Arhats* to use sand but even that golden Cinnabar sand was snatched away. When someone like you, Venerable Sir, lets loose a fiendish creature to rob and harm people with what kind of crime should we charge him?” Laozi said, “That diamond snare of mine is a treasure perfected since the time of my youth, and it was also an instrument with which I converted the barbarians when I passed through the Hangu Pass.<sup>7</sup> Whatever weapons you may have, including fire and water, you can’t touch it. If the demon had stolen my plantain-leaf fan also, then even I’d be unable to do anything to him.”

Thereafter, Laozi took up his plantain-leaf fan and mounted the auspicious cloud, followed by a happy Great Sage. They left the celestial palace, went through the South Heaven Gate, and lowered their clouds on the Golden Helmet Mountain. There they were met by the eighteen *Arhats*, the thunder squires, Water Lord, Fiery Virtue, and Deity-King Li and his son, to whom they gave a thorough account of what had taken place. “Sun Wukong,” said Laozi, “may go again to entice him to come out: I’ll put him away then.”

Jumping down from the summit, Pilgrim again shouted, “You cursed blubbery beast! Come out quickly and submit to death!” Once more the little fiends went inside to report, and the old demon said, “This larcenous ape has asked someone to come again.” Quickly he took up his lance and treasure and walked out of the door. “You brazen demon!” scolded Pilgrim. “This time you’ll die for sure! Don’t run away. Have a taste of my palm!” He leaped right onto the chest of the demon and gave him a terrific whack on the ear before turning to flee. Wielding his lance, the demon gave chase, only to hear someone calling on the tall summit: “If that little buffalo doesn’t come home now, what’s he waiting for?” When the demon raised his head and saw that it was Laozi, his heart shook and his gall quivered.

“That thievish ape’s,” he said, “truly a devil of the Earth! How did he manage to find my master?”

Reciting a spell, Laozi fanned the air once with his fan. The fiend threw the fillet at Laozi who caught it immediately and gave him another fan. All at once the fiend’s strength fled him and his tendons turned numb; he changed back into his original form that was that of a green buffalo. Blowing a mouthful of divine breath on the diamond snare, Laozi then used it to pierce the nostrils of the fiend.

Next, he took off the sash around his waist and fastened one end of it to the snare while his hand held the other. Thus the custom of leading the buffalo with a ring in its nose was established, a custom in use even now. This is also what we call *binlang*.<sup>8</sup> After he took leave of the various deities, Laozi climbed onto the back of his green buffalo. *Mounting coloured clouds, he went back to Tushita Palace; having bound the fiend, he ascended to the Griefless Heaven.* Then the Great Sage Sun fought his way with the other deities into the cave and slaughtered all the remaining little fiends, some one hundred of them. Each of the gods recovered his weapons after which the dad-and-son team of Deity-King Li went back to Heaven; the thunder squires to their mansions; Fiery Virtue to his palace; Water Lord to his rivers; and the *Arhats* to the West. Pilgrim then took back his iron rod and untied the Tang Monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk who also gave thanks to him. After they got the horse and the luggage ready, master and disciples left the cave and found the main road to journey once more. As they proceeded, they heard someone by the road calling, “Holy Tang Monk, eat the food first before you go.” The elder was terribly frightened.

053  
***Imbibing, the Chan Lord conceives a ghostly child; Yellow Dame brings water to end the weird foetus***  
*Perform 800 virtuous acts; make 3000 unknown merits.*  
*Treating justly thing and self, kin and foe will fit Western Heaven’s basic vow.<sup>1</sup>*  
*Bull-demon fears no knife or sword; in vain water and fire have toiled.*  
*Laozi subdues it, turns its face to Heaven – laughing, he now leads the green buffalo.<sup>2</sup>*

Someone by the road was calling the pilgrims. They were actually the mountain god and the local spirit of the Golden Helmet Mountain. Holding up the alms-bowl of purple gold, they cried, “O Holy Monk! This bowl of rice’s one that the Great Sage Sun succeeded in begging from a good place. Because all of you didn’t listen to sound advice, you fell by mistake into the hands of a demon. The Great Sage had to toil and struggle most pitifully before he managed to rescue you today. Come and eat the rice first before you journey. Don’t abuse the filial reverence of the Great Sage.”

“Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “I’m deeply indebted to you and can’t thank you enough. If I’d known it before, I’d have never left that circle of yours and there’d have been no such mortal danger.”

“To tell you the truth, Master,” said Pilgrim, “because you didn’t believe in my circle, you had to be placed in someone else’s circle. What suffering you had to bear! It’s lamentable!”

“What do you mean by someone else’s circle?” asked 8 Rules. Pilgrim replied, “Coolie, it was the doing of your cursed mouth and cursed tongue that landed this great ordeal on Master. What old monkey dug up in Heaven and on Earth – the fire, the water, the celestial soldiers, and the cinnabar sand of a god – they were all sucked away by a ghostly white fillet of his. Through two *Arhats* however, Siddhartha secretly revealed to old monkey the origin of that fiend, and only then could we ask Laozi to come here to subdue him. It was his green buffalo that was causing all the trouble.”

When Tripitaka heard this, he thanked him profusely, saying, “Worthy disciple, after this experience, I’ll certainly listen to you next time.” Whereupon the four of them divided up the rice to eat, rice that was still steaming hot. “This rice’s been here for a long time,” said Pilgrim. “Why’s it still hot?”

Kneeling down, the local spirit said, “Since this humble deity’s learned that the Great Sage’s achieved his merit, he heated up the rice first before serving it.”

In a moment, they finished the rice and put away the alms-bowl. Having taken leave of the mountain god and the local spirit, the master mounted his horse to pass the tall mountain. Thus it was that *mind purged of care, they a god’s wisdom embrace; <sup>3</sup>they dine on wind and rest by water to journey west.* After travelling for a long time, it was again early spring and they heard *purple swallows murmuring and orioles warbling. Purple swallows murmur, tiring their scented beaks; orioles warble, their artful notes persist. Ground full of fallen blooms like brocade spread out; whole mountain birthing green like mounds of moss. On the peak green plums are budding; the cliff’s cedars detain the clouds. Faint, misty lights over the meadows; sandbars warmed by bright sunshine. In few gardens floral stamens unfold; the sun back to earth turns willow strands gold.* As they walked along, they came upon a small river of cool, limpid currents. The elder Tang reined in his horse to look around and saw in the distance several thatched huts beneath willows hanging jade-like. Pointing in that direction, Pilgrim said, “There must be someone running a ferryboat in those houses.”

“It’s likely,” said Tripitaka, “but since I’ve not seen a boat, I daren’t open my mouth.”

Dropping down the luggage, 8 Rules shouted, “Hey, ferryman! Punt your boat over here.”

He yelled several times and indeed, from beneath the shade of willows a boat emerged, creaking as it was punted. In a little while, it approached the shore while master and disciples stared at it. Truly *as a paddle parts the foam, a light boat floats on the waves with olive cabins brightly painted and a deck made of flat, level boards. On the bow, iron cords encircle; at the stern, a shining rudder stem. Though it may be a reed of a boat, it will sail the lakes and the seas; though without fancy cables and tall masts, it has in fact oars of cedar and pine. It is unlike the divine ship of great distance but it can traverse a river’s width. It comes and goes only between 2 banks; it moves only in and out of ancient fords.* In a moment, the boat touched the bank, and the person punting called out: “If you want to cross the river, come over here.”

Tripitaka urged his horse forward to take a look at the boatman and saw that the person had *a woollen wrap on the head and 2 black silk shoes on the feet; an often patched cotton coat on the body; 1000-stitched, old cloth skirt hugged the waist. The wrists had coarse skin and the tendons, strength; dim eyes, knitted brows showed features of age. The voice like an oriole’s was soft and coy; an old woman appeared on closer look.* Walking to the side of the boat, Pilgrim said, “You’re the one ferrying the boat?”

“Yes,” said the woman.

“Why is the ferryman not here?” asked Pilgrim. “Why’s the ferrywoman punting the boat?”

The woman smiled and did not reply; she pulled out the gangplank instead and set it up. Sand-monk then poled the luggage into the boat, followed by the master holding onto Pilgrim. Then they moved the boat sideways so that 8 Rules could lead the horse to step into it. After the gangplank was put away, the woman punted the boat away from shore and, in a moment, rowed it across the river. After they reached the western shore, the elder asked Sand-monk to untie one of the wraps and take out a few pennies for the woman. Without disputing the price, the woman tied the boat to a wooden pillar by the water and walked into one of the village huts nearby, giggling loudly all the time. When Tripitaka saw how clear the water was, he felt thirsty and told 8 Rules: “Get the alms-bowl and fetch some water for me to drink.”

“I was just about to drink some myself,” said Idiot who took out the alms-bowl and bailed out a full bowl of water to hand over to the master.

The master drank less than half of the water, and when Idiot took the bowl back, he drank the rest of it in one gulp before he helped his master to mount the horse once more. After master and disciples found their way to the West they had hardly travelled half an hour when the elder began to groan as he rode. “Stomach-ache!” he said.

8 Rules who was behind him also said, “I’ve a stomach-ache, too.”

Sand-monk said, “It must be the cold water you drank.” But before he even finished speaking, the elder cried out: “The pain’s awful!” 8 Rules also screamed, “The pain’s awful!” As the two of them struggled with this unbearable pain, their bellies began to swell in size steadily. Inside their abdomens, there seemed to be a clot of blood or a lump of flesh that could be felt clearly by the hand, kicking and jumping wildly about. Tripitaka was in great discomfort when they came upon a small village by the road; two bundles of hay were tied to some branches on a tall tree nearby. “Master, that’s good!” said Pilgrim. “The house over there must be an inn. Let me go over there to beg some hot liquid for you. I’ll ask them also whether there is an apothecary around, so that I can get some ointment for your stomach-ache.”

Delighted by what he heard, Tripitaka whipped his white horse and soon arrived at the village. As he dismounted, he saw an old woman sitting on a grass mound outside the village gate and knitting hemp. Pilgrim went forward and saluted to her with palms pressed together saying, “*Popo*,” “this poor monk has come from the Great Tang in the Land of the East. My master is the royal brother of the Tang court. Because he drank some water from the river back there after we crossed it, he is having a stomach-ache.” Breaking into loud guffaws, the woman said, “You people drank some water from the river?”

“Yes,” replied Pilgrim, “we drank some of the clean river water east of here.” Giggling loudly, the old woman said, “What fun! What fun! Come in, all of you. I’ll tell you something.”

Pilgrim went to support Tang Monk while Sand-monk held up 8 Rules; moaning with every step, the two sick men walked into the thatched hut to take a seat, their stomachs protruding and their faces turning yellow from the pain. “*Popo*,” Pilgrim kept saying, “please make some hot liquid for my master. We’ll thank you.” Instead of boiling water however, the old woman dashed inside, laughing and yelling, “Come and look, all of you!”

With loud clip-clops, several middle-aged women ran out from within to stare at the Tang Monk, grinning stupidly all the time. Enraged, Pilgrim gave a yell and ground his teeth together, so frightening all of them that they turned to flee, stumbling all over. Pilgrim darted forward and caught the old woman, crying, “Boil some water quick and I’ll spare you!”

“Sire!” said the old woman, shaking violently, “boiled water is useless to cure their stomach-aches. Let me go, and I’ll tell you.” Pilgrim released her, and she said, “This is the Women State of Western Liang.<sup>3</sup> Not even a single male but only women live in our state. That’s why we’re amused when we saw you. That water your master drank is not the best, for the river is called Child-and-Mum River. Outside our capital we also have a Male Reception Posthouse, by the side of which there is also a Pregnancy Reflection Stream. Only after reaching her twentieth year would someone from this region dare go and drink that river’s water, for she would feel the pain of conception soon after she took a drink. After three days, she would go to the Male Reception Posthouse and look at her reflection in the stream. If a double reflection appears, it means that she will give birth to a child. Since your master drank some water from the Child-and-Mum River, he, too, has become pregnant and will give birth to a child. How could hot water cure him?”

When Tripitaka heard this, he paled with fright. “O disciple,” he cried, “what shall we do?”

“O dad!” groaned 8 Rules as he twisted to spread his legs further apart, “we’re men, and we’ve to give birth to babies? Where can we find a birth canal? How could the foetus come out?” With a chuckle Pilgrim said, “According to the ancients, ‘A ripe melon will fall by itself.’ When the time comes, you may have a gaping hole at your armpit and the baby will crawl out.”

When 8 Rules heard this, he shook with fright, and that made the pain all the more unbearable. “Finished! Finished!” he cried. “I’m dead! I’m dead!”



"Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, laughing, "stop writhing! Stop writhing! You may hurt the umbilical cord and end up with some sort of prenatal sickness." Idiot became more alarmed than ever. Tears welling up in his eyes, he tugged at Pilgrim and said, "Elder Brother, please ask the *Popo* to see if they have some midwives here who are not too heavy-handed. Let's find a few right away. The movement inside is becoming more frequent now. It must be labour pain. It's coming! It's coming!" Again Sand-monk said, chuckling, "Second Elder Brother, if it's labour pain, you'd better sit still. I fear you may puncture the water bag."

"O *Popo*," said Tripitaka with a moan, "do you've a physician here? I'll ask my disciple to go there and ask for a prescription. We'll take the drug and have an abortion."

"Even drugs are useless," said the old woman, "but due south of here there is a Male-Undoing Mountain. In it there is a Child Destruction Cave, and inside the cave there is an Abortion Stream. You must drink a mouthful of water from the stream before the pregnancy can be terminated. But nowadays, it's not easy to get that water. Last year, a Daoist by the name of True Mortal Compliant came on the scene and he changed the name of the Child Destruction Cave to the Abbey of Mortal Assembly. Claiming the water from the Abortion Stream as his possession, he refused to give it out freely. Anyone who wants the water must present monetary offerings together with meats, juices, and fruit baskets. After saluting him in complete reverence, you'll receive a tiny bowl of the water. But all of you're mendicants. Where could you find the kind of money you need to spend for something like this? You might as well suffer here and wait for the births." When Pilgrim heard this, he was filled with delight. "*Popo*," he said, "how far is it from here to the Male-Undoing Mountain?"

"About three thousand miles," replied the old woman.

"Excellent!" said Pilgrim. "Relax, Master! Let old monkey go and fetch some of that water for you to drink." *Dear Great Sage!* He gave this instruction to Sand-monk: "Take good care of Master. If this family ill behaves and tries to hurt him, bring out your old thuggery and scare them a little. Let me go fetch the water."

Sand-monk obeyed. The old woman then took out a large porcelain bowl to hand over to Pilgrim saying, "Take this bowl and try to get as much water as possible. We can save some for an emergency." Indeed Pilgrim took over the bowl, left that thatched hut, and mounted the cloud to leave. Only then did the old woman raised her hands, saluting the air, and cried, "O dad! This monk knows how to ride the clouds!"

She went inside and told the other women to come out to respect to the Tang Monk, all addressing him as *Arhat* or Nun. Then they began to boil water and prepare rice to present to the pilgrims. The Great Sage Sun on his cloud somersault; he saw the peak of a mountain blocking his path in a little while. Dropping down from his cloudy luminosity, he opened wide his eyes to look around. *Marvellous Mountain!* He saw *rare flowers spreading brocade; wild grass unrolling blue; plunging streams – one after another; brooks and clouds, both leisurely. Canyons, packed together, rank with creepers and vines; ranges, stretching afar, dense with forests and trees. Birds call, and wild geese glide by; deer drink, and monkeys clamber. A mountain green like a jade screen; a ridge blue like locks of hair. Difficult indeed to reach from this world of dust! Rocks and water splashing, a sight that never tires!*

*1 often sees mortal lads leave, picking herbs. 1 often meets woodsmen come, bearing loads. Truly it's almost the scenery of Mount-Tai surpassing perhaps the 3 peaks of Flower Mount.* As the Great Sage stared at the scenery, he discovered also a building with its back on the dark side of the mountain and from where the sound of a dog barking could be heard. Going down the mountain, the Great Sage went toward the building that was also a rather nice place. Look at the *stream piercing a small bridge; thatched huts nestling a green hill. A dog barks near the lonely fence; the recluse comes and goes at will.* In a moment he came up to the gate where he found an old Daoist sitting cross-legged on the green lawn. When the Great Sage put down his porcelain bowl to salute him, the Daoist rose slightly to return his greeting saying, "Where did you come from? For what purpose you've come to this humble Abbey?"

Pilgrim replied, "This poor monk is a scripture pilgrim sent by imperial commission of the Great Tang in the Land of the East. Because my master mistakenly drank water from the Child-and-Mum River, he is suffering from a swollen belly and unbearable pain. We asked the natives there and learned that the pregnancy thus formed has no cure. We're told however, that there's an Abortion Stream in the Child Destruction Cave of the Male-Undoing Mountain, and its water can eliminate the conception. This is why I've come especially to see the True Mortal Compliant, in order to beg from him some water to save my master. May I trouble the old Daoist to lead me to him?"

"This used to be the Child Destruction Cave," said the Daoist, chuckling, "but it's now changed to the Abbey of Mortal Assembly. I'm none other than the eldest disciple of the venerable dad, True Mortal Compliant. What's your name? Tell me so I can announce you."

"I'm the eldest disciple of Tripitaka Tang, master of the Law," said Pilgrim, "and my humble name is Sun Wukong."

"Where are your monetary gifts?" asked the Daoist. "Your offerings of juice?" Pilgrim said, "We're mendicants on a journey, and we've not prepared them."

"You're quite mad!" said the Daoist, chuckling again. "My old master is now the protector of this mountain stream, and he has never given its water free to anyone. You go back and bring some gifts, and I'll announce you. Otherwise, please leave. Don't think about the water!" Pilgrim said, "Goodwill can be more powerful than an imperial edict. If you go and announce the name of old monkey, I'm sure that he will express his goodwill. Perhaps he will turn over the entire well of water to me."

This statement of Pilgrim gave the Daoist little alternative but to go inside to make the announcement. As the True Mortal was just playing the lute, the Daoist had to wait until he finished playing before saying, "Master, there is a Religious monk outside who claims to be Sun Wukong, the eldest disciple of Tripitaka Tang. He wants some water from the Abortion Stream to save his master."

It would have been better if the True Mortal had not heard the name, for the moment he came upon those words, Wukong, *anger flared in his heart, wrath sprouted from his gall.* Jumping down quickly from his lute couch, he took off his casual garment and put on his Daoist robe. He picked up a compliant hook and leaped out of the door of the Abbey. "Where's Sun Wukong?" he shouted.

Pilgrim turned his head to see how that True Mortal was dressed in a *star cap of bright colours crowned his head; wore a red magic robe with golden threads. His cloud shoes were topped by patterned brocade; an elegant treasure belt wrapped around his waist. A pair of stockings of embroidered silk; half visible, a patterned woollen kilt. His hands held a compliant golden hook: the blade, sharp; the handle, dragon-like and long. Phoenix eyes glowed with brows going straight up; sharp, steely teeth within a blood-red mouth. A beard soared like bright flames beneath his chin; like rushes flared his temple's scarlet hair. His form seemed as violent as Marshal Wen's<sup>6</sup> although their clothing was not the same.* When Pilgrim saw him, he pressed his palms together before him and saluted saying, "This poor monk's Sun Wukong."

"Are you the real Sun Wukong," said the master with a laugh, "or are you merely assuming his name and surname?"

"Look at the way the master speaks!" said Pilgrim. "As the proverb says, 'A gentleman changes neither his name when he stands, nor his surname when he sits.' What would be the reason for me to assume someone else's name?"

The master asked, "Do you recognise me?"

"Since I made repentance in the Religious gate and embraced with all sincerity the teaching of the monks," said Pilgrim, "I've only been climbing mountains and fording waters. I've lost contact with all the friends of my youth. Because I've never been able to visit you, I've never beheld your honourable countenance before. When we asked for our way in a village household west of the Child-and-Mum River, they told me that the master is called the True Mortal Compliant. That's how I know your name."

The master said, "You're walking on your way, and I'm cultivating my authentic mortality. Why did you come to visit me?"

"Because my master drank by mistake the water of the Child-and-Mum River," replied Pilgrim, "and his stomach-ache turned into a pregnancy. I came especially to your mortal mansion to beg you for a bowl of water from the Abortion Stream, in order that my master might be freed from this ordeal."

"Is your master Tripitaka Tang?" asked the master, his eyes glowering.

"Yes, indeed!" answered Pilgrim.

Grinding his teeth together, the master said spitefully, "Have you run into a Great King Holy Child?"

"That's the nickname of the fiend, Red Boy," said Pilgrim, "who lived in the Fiery Cloud Cave by the Dried Pine Stream, in the Roaring Mountain. Why does the True Mortal ask after him?"

"He happens to be my nephew," replied the master, "and the Bull Demon King is my brother. Some time ago my elder brother told me in a letter that Sun Wukong, the eldest disciple of Tripitaka Tang, was such a rascal that he brought his son great harm. I didn't know where to find you for vengeance but you came instead to seek me out. And you're asking me for water?"

Trying to placate him with a smile, Pilgrim said, "You're wrong, Sir. Your elder brother used to be my friend, for both of us belonged to a league of seven bond brothers when we're young. I just didn't know about you, and so I didn't come to pay my respect in your mansion. Your nephew is very well off, for he is now the attendant of the Nun Guanyin. He has become Sudhana, the Boy Skilled in Wealth with whom even we can't compare. Why do you blame me instead?"

"You brazen monkey!" shouted the master.

"Still waxing your tongue! Is my nephew better off being a king by himself, or being a slave to someone? Stop this insolence and have a taste of my hook!" Using the iron rod to parry the blow, the Great Sage said, "Please don't use the language of war, Sir. Give me some water and I'll leave."

"Brazen monkey!" scolded the master. "You don't know any better! If you can withstand me for three rounds, I'll give you the water. If not, I'll chop you up as meat sauce to avenge my nephew."

"You damned ignorant fool!" scolded Pilgrim. "You don't know what's good for you! If you want to fight, come up here and watch my rod!"

The master at once countered with his compliant hook and the 2 of them had quite a fight before the Abbey of Mortal Assembly. *The sage monk drinks from this procreant stream and Pilgrim must the Mortal Compliant seek. Who knows the True Mortal is a fiend that safeguards by force the Abortion Stream? When these 2 meet, they speak as enemies feuding and resolved not to give 1 whit. The words thus traded engender distress; rancour and malice so bent on revenge. This one whose master's life is threatened, comes seeking water; that 1 for losing his nephew declines to yield the stream. Fierce as a scorpion's the compliant hook; wild like a dragon's the golden-hooped rod. Madly it stabs the chest, what savagery! Aslant, it hooks the legs, what subtlety! The rod aiming down there' inflicts grave wounds; the hook, passing shoulders, will whip the head. The rod slaps the waist – a hawk holds a bird. The hook swipes the head – a mantis hits its prey. They lunge here and there, both striving to win; y turn and close in repeatedly. The hook hooks, the rod strikes without let-up – victory cannot be seen on either side. The master fought the Great Sage for over ten rounds and then he began to weaken. The Great Sage however, grew fiercer, the blows of his rod raining on his opponent's head like a meteor shower. His strength all gone, the master fled toward the mountain with his compliant hook trailing behind him. Instead of chasing after him, the Great Sage wanted to go into the Abbey to look for the water but the Daoist had long had the door tightly shut. Holding the porcelain bowl, the Great Sage dashed up to the door and kicked it down with all his might. He rushed inside and saw the Daoist leaning on the well, covering its mouth with his body. The Great Sage lifted high his rod and shouted that he was about to strike, causing the Daoist to flee to the rear. Then he found a bucket but just as he tried to bail some water, the master dashed out from the rear and caught hold of one of his legs with the compliant hook. One hard tug sent the Great Sage tumbling beak-first to the ground. Clambering up, the Great Sage at once attacked with his iron rod but the master only retreated to 1 side. With hook in hand, he cried, "See if you'd take away my water!"*

"Come up here! Come up here!" yelled the Great Sage. "I'll beat you to death!"

But the master refused to go forward to fight; he just stood there and refused to permit the Great Sage to bail out the water. When the Great Sage saw that his enemy was motionless, he wielded his iron rod with his left hand while his right hand tried to let the rope down the well. Before the pulley had made several turns however, the master again struck with his hook. As the Great Sage could hardly protect himself with only one hand, the hook once more caught hold of one of his legs, causing him to stumble and the rope to fall into the well, bucket and all. "This fellow is quite rude!" said the Great Sage who clambered up and, holding the iron rod now with both hands, showered his opponent's body and head with blows. Not daring to face him and fight, the master fled away as before. Again the Great Sage wanted to get the water but this time he had no bucket, and moreover, he was afraid that the master would return to attack him. He thought to himself: "I must go and find a helper."

Dear Great Sage! He mounted the clouds and went straight back to the village hut, crying, "Sand-monk." Inside Tripitaka was moaning to endure the pain while the groans of 8 Rules were continuous. Delighted by the call, they said, "Sand-monk, Wukong's back." Sand-monk hurried out the door to ask, "Big Brother, have you brought water?" The Great Sage entered and gave a thorough account to the Tang Monk. Shedding tears, Tripitaka said, "O disciple! How is this going to end?"

"I came back," said the Great Sage, "to ask Brother Sand to go with me. When we reach the Abbey, old monkey will fight with that fellow and Sand-monk can use the opportunity to get that water to save you." Tripitaka said, "Both of you who are healthy will be gone, leaving behind the two of us who are sick. Who will look after us?" The old woman waiting on them said, "Relax, old *Arhat*. You don't need your disciples. We'll serve you and take care of you. When you first arrived, we're already fond of you. Then we saw how this Nun travelled by cloud and fog, and we knew that you had to be an *Arhat* or Nun. We'll never dare to harm you again."

"You're all women here," snapped Pilgrim. "Whom do you dare to harm?"

"O dear dad!" said the old woman, giggling. "You're lucky to have come to my house. If you had gone to another one, none of you'd have remained whole."

"What do you mean," said 8 Rules, still groaning, "by not remaining whole?" The old woman replied, "The four or five of us in this family are all getting on in years. We've given up the activities of love. If you go to another family, there may be more youthful members than old ones. You think the young ones will let you go? They will want to have intercourse with you, and if you refuse, they will take your lives. Then they will cut you up to use your flesh to make fragrant bags."

"In that case," said 8 Rules, "I'll not be hurt. They all smell nice, and they'll be good for fragrant bags. I'm a stinking bull, and even when I'm cut up, I still stink. That's why I can't be hurt."

"Don't be so talkative!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Save your strength, so you can give birth." The old woman said, "No need for delay. Go quickly to get the water."

"Do you've a bucket in your house?" asked Pilgrim. "Please lend us one." The old woman went to the back to take out a bucket and rope to hand over to Sand-monk who said, "Let's bring two ropes. We may need them if the well is deep."

After Sand-monk received the bucket and the ropes, he followed the Great Sage out of the village hut and they left together, mounting the clouds. In less than half an hour, they arrived at the Male-Undoing Mountain. As they lowered their clouds to go before the Abbey, the Great Sage gave Sand-monk this instruction: "Take the bucket with the ropes and hide yourself. Old monkey will go and provoke battle. When we're in the thick of fighting, you can use the opportunity to go inside, get the water, and leave." Sand-monk obeyed.

Wielding his iron rod, the Great Sage Sun approached the door and shouted: "Open the door! Open the door!" The Daoist who stood guard at the door hurried inside to report, "Master, that Sun Wukong is here again." Greatly angered, the master said, "This brazen ape is insolent indeed! I've always heard that he has considerable abilities, and today I know it's true. That rod of his is quite difficult to withstand."

"Master," said the Daoist, "his abilities may be great but yours are not inferior. You're in fact exactly his match."

"But twice before," said the master, "I lost to him."

"Only in a contest of sheer violence," said the Daoist. "Later, when he tried to bail water, your hook made him fall twice. Haven't you equalized the situation? He had little alternative but to leave at first, and now he's back. It must be that Tripitaka's pregnancy is so advanced and his body so heavy that his complaints have driven this monkey to return, against his better judgement. He must feel rather contemptuous toward his master, and I'm sure that you'll win."

When the True Mortal heard these words, he became *delighted and filled with elation; full of smiles and brimming with power*. Holding straight his compliant hook, he walked out of the door and shouted, "Brazen simian! Why are you here again?"

"Only to fetch water," answered the Great Sage.

"That water," said the True Mortal, "happens to be in my well. Even if you're a king or a prime minister, you must come begging with offerings of meat and juices, and then I'll only give you a little. You're my enemy no less, and you dare to ask for it with empty hands?"

"You really refuse to give it to me?" asked the Great Sage.

The True Mortal replied, "Yes! Yes!"

"You damned fool!" scolded the Great Sage. "If you don't give me the water, watch my rod!" He opened up at once and rushed at the True Mortal, bringing down the rod hard on his head. Stepping aside quickly to dodge the blow, the True Mortal met him with the hook and fought back. It was even more ferocious a battle this time than last time. *What a fight!*

*Golden-hooped rod, compliant hook, 2 angry men so full of enmity. The cosmos darkens as sand and rocks fly up; sun and moon sadden as dirt and dust soar high. The Great Sage seeks water to save his master, denied by the fiend for his nephew's sake. The 2 exert their strength to wage a contest there. Teeth are ground together to strive for a victory. Even more alert, they arouse themselves. They belch cloud and fog to sadden ghosts and gods. Bing-bing and bang-bang clash both hook and rod, their cries, shouts shake up the mountain range. The fierce wind, howling, ravages the woods; the violent airs surge past the dipper stars. The Great Sage grows happier as he strives; the True Mortal's gladder as he fights. They do this battle with whole heart and mind; they will not give up until someone dies.* The 2 of them began their fighting outside the Abbey and as they struggled and exercised together, they gradually moved to the mountain slope below. Sand-monk crashed through the door, holding the bucket. He was met by the Daoist who barred the way at the well and said, "Who're you that you dare come to get our water?"

Dropping the bucket, Sand-monk took out his fiend-routing treasure staff and without a word, brought it down on the Daoist's head. The Daoist was unable to dodge fast enough, his left arm and shoulder were broken by this 1 blow. Falling to the ground, he lay there struggling for his life. "I wanted to slaughter you, cursed beast," scolded Sand-monk, "but you're after all a human being. I've still some pity for you and I'll spare you. Let me bail out the water."

Crying for Heaven and Earth to help him, the Daoist crawled slowly to the rear while Sand-monk lowered the bucket into the well and filled it to the brim. He then walked out of the Abbey and mounted the cloud and fog before he shouted to Pilgrim, "Big Brother, I've gotten the water and I'm leaving. Spare him! Spare him!"

When the Great Sage heard this, he stopped the hook with his iron rod and said, "I was about to exterminate you but you've not committed a crime. Moreover, I've still regard for the feelings of your brother, the Bull Demon King. When I first came here, I was hooked by you twice and didn't get my water. When I returned, I came with the trick of *enticing the tiger to leave the mountain* and deceived you into fighting me so that my brother could go inside to get the water. If old monkey's willing to use his real abilities to fight with you, don't say there's only one of you so-called True Mortal Compliant. Even if there're several of you, I'd beat you all to death. But to kill isn't as good as to let live and so I'm going to spare you and permit you to have a few more years. From now on if anyone wishes to obtain the water, you mustn't blackmail the person."

Not knowing anything better, that bogus mortal brandished his hook and once more attempted to catch Pilgrim's legs. The Great Sage evaded the blade of his hook and then rushed forward, crying, "Don't run!" The bogus mortal was caught unprepared and he was pushed head over heels to the ground, unable to get up. Grabbing the compliant hook the Great Sage snapped it in two; then he bundled the pieces together and with another bend, broke them into four segments. Throwing them on the ground, he said, "Brazen, cursed beast! Still dare to be unruly?" Trembling all over, the bogus mortal took the insult and dared not utter a word. Great Sage, in peals of laughter, mounted the cloud to rise into the air and a testimonial poem says:

*For smelling true lead true water you need; true water well mixed dries true mercury.  
True mercury and lead have no maternal breath; elixir are numinous drugs and grains.  
In vain baby boy has a pregnant form; Earth-Mum's achieved merit with ease.  
Heresy pushed down, right faith they learn; the Lord of the Mind all smiles, would return.*

Mounting the auspicious luminosity, the Great Sage caught up with Sand-monk. Having acquired the true water, they were filled with delight as they returned to where they belonged. After they lowered the clouds and went up to the village hut, they found Bullseye 8 Rules leaning on the door post and groaning, his belly huge and protruding. Walking quietly up to him, Pilgrim said, "Idiot, when did you enter the delivery room?"

Horrified, Idiot said, "Elder Brother, don't make fun of me. Did you bring the water?" Pilgrim was about to tease him some more when Sand-monk followed him in, laughing as he said, "Water's coming! Water's coming!"

Enduring the pain, Tripitaka rose slightly and said, "O disciples, I've caused you a lot of trouble." That old woman, too, was most delighted, and all of her relatives came out to respect, crying, "O Nun! This is our luck! This is our luck!" She took a goblet of flowered porcelain, filled it half full, and handed it to Tripitaka, saying, "Old master, drink it slowly. All you need is a mouthful and the pregnancy will dissolve."

"I don't need any goblet," said 8 Rules. "I'll just finish the bucket."

"O venerable dad, don't scare people to death!" said the old woman. "If you drink this bucket of water, your stomach and your intestines will all be dissolved." Idiot was so taken aback that he dared not misbehave; he drank only half a goblet.

In less than the time of a meal, the two of them experienced sharp pain and cramps in their bellies, and then their intestines growled four or five times. After that, Idiot could no longer contain himself: both waste and urine poured out of him. The Tang Monk, too, felt the urge to relieve himself and wanted to go to a quiet place. "Master," said Pilgrim, "you mustn't go out to a place where there is a draft. If you're exposed to the wind, I fear that you may catch some postnatal illness." At once the old woman brought to them two night pots so that the two of them could find relief. After several bowel movements, the pain stopped and the swelling of their bellies gradually subsided as the lump of blood and flesh dissolved. The relatives of the old woman also boiled some white rice congee and presented it to them to strengthen their postnatal weakness. "Popo," said 8 Rules, "I've a healthy constitution, and I've no need to strengthen any postnatal weakness. You go and boil me some water, so that I can take a bath before I eat the congee."

"Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "you can't take a bath. If water gets inside someone within a month after birth, the person will be sick." 8 Rules said, "But I've not given proper birth to anything; at most, I only have had a miscarriage. What's there to be afraid of? I must wash and clean up." Indeed, the old woman prepared some hot water for them to clean their hands and feet. The Tang Monk then ate about two bowls of congee but 8 Rules consumed over fifteen bowls and he still wanted more. "Coolie," chuckled Pilgrim, "don't eat so much. If you get a sand-bag belly, you'll look quite awful."

"Don't worry, don't worry," replied 8 Rules. "I'm no female bull. So what's there to be afraid of?" The family members indeed went to prepare some more rice.

The old woman then said to the Tang Monk, "Old master, please bestow this water on me." Pilgrim said, "Idiot, you're not drinking the water anymore?"

"My stomach-ache is gone," said 8 Rules, "and the pregnancy, I suppose, must be dissolved. I'm quite fine now. Why should I drink any more water?"

"Since the two of them have recovered," said Pilgrim, "we'll give this water to your family." After thanking Pilgrim, the old woman poured what was left of the water into a porcelain jar that she buried in the rear garden. She said to the rest of the family, "This jar of water will take care of my funeral expenses." Everyone in that family, young and old, was delighted. A vegetarian meal was prepared and tables were set out to serve to the Tang Monk. He and his disciples had a leisurely dinner and then rested. At dawn the next day, they thanked the old woman and her family before leaving the village.

Tripitaka Tang mounted up, Sand-monk toted the luggage, Bullseye 8 Rules held the reins, and the Great Sage Sun led the way in front. So, this is how it should be: *the mouth washed of its sins, the self is clean; worldly conception dissolved, the body's fit.*

## 054

### Religion-nature, going west, reaches the Women State; Mind Monkey makes a plan to flee the fair gender

Tripitaka and his disciples left the household at the village and followed the road westward. In less than 40 miles, they arrived at the state border of Western Liang. Pointing ahead as he rode along, the Tang Monk said, "Wukong, we're approaching a city, and from the noise and hubbub coming from the markets, I suppose it must be the Women State. All of you must take care to behave properly. Keep your desires under control and don't let them violate the teachings of our gate of Law." Hearing this, the three disciples obeyed the strict admonition. Soon they reached the head of the street that opened to the eastern gate. The people there with long skirts and short blouses, powdered faces and oily heads, were all women regardless of whether they were young or old. Many of them were doing business on the streets, and when they saw the four of them walking by, they all clapped their hands in acclaim and laughed aloud, crying happily, "Human seeds are coming! Human seeds are coming!"<sup>1</sup>

Tripitaka was so startled that he reined in his horse; all at once the street was blocked, completely filled with women, and all you'd hear were laughter and chatter. 8 Rules began to holler wildly: "I'm a bull for sale! I'm a bull for sale!"

"Idiot," said Pilgrim, "stop this nonsense. Bring out your old features, that's all!" Indeed 8 Rules shook his head a couple of times and stuck up his 2 rush-leaf fan ears; then he wriggled his lips like 2 hanging lotus roots and gave a yell, so frightening those women that they all fell and stumbled. A testimonial poem says:

*The sage monk, seeking God, reached Western Liang, a land full of females but without 1 male.  
Farmers, scholars, workers, and those in trade, the anglers and ploughmen were women all.  
Maidens lined the streets crying, "Human seeds!"  
Young girls filled the roads to greet the comely men.  
If Aware of Ability didn't show his ugly face, the siege by the fair gender would be pain indeed.*

In this way, the people became frightened and none dared go forward; everyone was rubbing her hands and squatting down. They shook their heads, bit their fingers, and crowded both sides of the street, trembling all over but still eager to stare at the Tang Monk. The Great Sage Sun had to display his hideous face in order to open up the road while Sand-monk, too, played monster to keep order. Leading the horse, 8 Rules stuck out his horn and waved his ears. As the whole entourage proceeded, the pilgrims discovered that the houses in the city were built in orderly rows while the shops had lavish displays. There were merchants selling rice and salt; there were juice and teahouses – *all bell and drum towers with goods piled high; bannered kiosks and hostels with screens hung low*. As master and disciples followed the street through its several turns, they came upon a woman official standing in the street and crying, "Visitors from afar should not enter the city gate without permission. Please go to the posthouse and enter your names on the register. Allow this humble official to announce you to the throne. After your rescript is certified, you'll be permitted to pass through." Hearing this, Tripitaka dismounted; then he saw a horizontal plaque hung over the gate of an official mansion nearby, and on the plaque were the three words, Male Reception Posthouse. "Wukong," said the elder; "what that family in the village said is true. There is indeed a Male Reception Posthouse."

"Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, laughing, "go and show yourself at the Pregnancy Reflection Stream and see if there's a double reflection."

8 Rules replied, "Don't play with me! Since I drank that cup of water from the Abortion Stream, the pregnancy has been dissolved. Why'd I show myself?"

Turning around, Tripitaka said to him, "Aware of Ability, be careful with your words."

He then went forward to greet the woman official who led them inside the posthouse. After they took their seats in the main hall, the official asked for tea to be served. All the servants working here combed their hair into three braids, and their garments were worn in two sections. Look at them! Even those serving tea were tittering. In a moment, they finished tea, and the official rose and asked,

"Where did the visitors come from?" Pilgrim replied, "We're people from the Land of the East, sent by imperial commission of the Great Tang Emperor to worship God in the Western Heaven and to seek scriptures. My master, the royal brother of the Tang emperor, bears the title of Tripitaka Tang. I'm Sun Wukong, his eldest disciple, and these two – Bullseye Aware of Ability and Sand Awakened to Purity – are my brothers. There are five of us altogether, including the horse. We've with us a travel rescript, and we beg you to certify it so that we may pass through." After the woman official wrote this in the register with a brush, she came forward to respect, saying, "Venerable Dads, please pardon me. This humble official is the clerk at the Male Reception Posthouse. I didn't know that such dignitaries from a noble nation were on their way, and therefore I didn't go to a distance to meet you." After she respected, she rose and immediately gave an order to the housekeeper to prepare food and drink. "Let the venerable dads sit here for a while," she said, "and this humble official will enter the capital to present a memorial to our ruler. We'll certify your rescript and use our seals so that you can be sent on your way to the West."

Delighted, Tripitaka sat down. The clerk of the posthouse after she had put on the proper attire, went to the 5 Phoenix Tower inside the capital and said to the Custodian of the Yellow Gate, "I'm the clerk of the Male Reception Posthouse, and I must have an audience with the throne." The Yellow Gate at once presented the memorial, and the clerk was summoned up to the main palace hall. The queen asked, "Why does the Clerk of the posthouse wish to see us?"

"Your humble subject," said the clerk, "has just received in the posthouse Tripitaka Tang, the royal brother of the Great Tang Emperor in the Land of the East. He has three disciples by the names of Sun Wukong, Bullseye Aware of Ability, and Sand Awakened to Purity; there are altogether five of them, including a horse. They are on their way to seek scriptures from a god in the Western Heaven. I've come especially to report this to my queen and to ask whether they may have their travel rescript certified and the permission to pass through." When the queen heard this report, she was filled with delight. "Last night," she said to the civil and military officials, "we dreamed that *luminous hues grew from the screens of gold, refulgent rays spread from the mirrors of jade*. That'd be a good omen for today."

"Mistress," said the women officials in unison as they saluted themselves before the vermilion steps, "how could you tell that it was a good omen?" The queen said, "This man from the Land of the East is a royal brother of the Tang court. In our country, the rulers of various generations since the time when chaos divided had never seen a man come here. Now the royal brother of the Tang emperor has arrived, and he must be a gift from Heaven. We'll use the wealth of an entire nation to ask this royal brother to be king; we're willing to be his queen. Such a sexual union will produce children and grandchildren, and the perpetuity of our kingdom will be assured. When you consider this, is not our dream a good omen?"

The women officials all respected to express their delight and acclaim. Then the clerk of the posthouse said, "What our mistress's proposed is good for extending the familial line to ten thousand generations. But those three disciples of the royal brother are savage men; their appearances are most unsightly."

"According to what you've seen, worthy subject, how does that royal brother look?" asked the queen. "And how do his disciples look?"

"The royal brother," said the clerk, "has features most dignified and handsome, truly befitting a man who belongs to the Heavenly court of a noble nation, the China of South Jambūdvīpa. His three disciples however, have such savage looks that they appear to be spirits."

"In that case," said the queen, "let's provide his disciples with some supplies and certify the travel rescript for them. We'll send them off to the Western Heaven, and only the royal brother will remain here. Anything wrong with that?"

Again the officials saluted to say, "The words of our mistress are most appropriate, and your subjects obey your instruction. The affair of marriage however, requires a matchmaker for as the ancients have declared, *the marriage contract depends on red leaves;<sup>2</sup> a couple's joined by the moon-man's scarlet threads.*"<sup>3</sup>

"We'll follow the counsel of our subjects," replied the queen. "Let the present Grand Preceptor serve as our marriage go-between, and the clerk of the Male Reception Posthouse as the one who officiates the ceremony. Let them go first to the posthouse to propose to the royal brother. If he consents, we'll take our carriage out of the capital to receive him."

The Grand Preceptor and the clerk accepted this decree and left the court. We now tell you about Tripitaka and his disciples who were just enjoying their vegetarian meal at the hall of the posthouse when someone came in to report: "The Grand Preceptor and our own governess have arrived." Tripitaka said, "Why does the Grand Preceptor come here?"

"Perhaps the queen wants to give us an invitation," said 8 Rules. "If not that," said Pilgrim, "then to offer a proposal of marriage."

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, "if they hold us and want to force us to marry them, what shall we do?"

"Master," replied Pilgrim, "just say yes to them. Old monkey will take care of the matter."

They had hardly finished speaking when the two women officials arrived and saluted deeply to the elder who returned their salutations one by one, saying, "This humble cleric is someone who has left the family. What virtue or talent do I've that I dare let you salute me?" When the Grand Preceptor saw how impressive the elder looked, she was delighted and thought to herself, "Our nation is truly quite lucky! Such a man is most worthy to be the husband of our ruler." After the officials made their greetings, they stood on either side of the Tang Monk and said, "Dad royal brother, we wish you ten thousand happiness!"

"I'm someone who has left the family," replied Tripitaka. "Where do those happiness come from?" Again bending low, the Grand Preceptor said, "This is the Women State in the Western Liang, and since time immemorial, there is not a single male in our country. We're lucky at this time to have the arrival of dad royal brother. Your subject, by the decree of my ruler, has come especially to offer a proposal of marriage."

"My goodness! My goodness!" said Tripitaka. "This poor monk has arrived at your esteemed region all by himself without the attendance of either son or daughter. I've with me only three mischievous disciples, and I wonder to which of us is offered this marriage proposal."

The posthouse clerk said, "Your lowly official just now went into court to present my report, and my ruler, in great delight, told us of an auspicious dream she had last night. She dreamed that *luminous hues grew from the screens of gold, refulgent rays spread from the mirrors of jade*. When she learned that the royal brother is a man from the noble nation of China, she was willing to use the wealth of her entire nation to ask you to be her live-in husband. You'd take the royal seat facing south to be called the man set apart from others,<sup>4</sup> and our ruler would be the queen. That was why she gave the decree for the Grand Preceptor to serve as the marriage go-between and this lowly official to officiate at the wedding. We came especially to offer you this proposal."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he saluted his head and fell into complete silence. "When a man finds the time propitious," said the Grand Preceptor, "he'd not pass up such an opportunity. Though there is, to be sure, such a thing in the world as asking a husband to live in the wife's family, the dowry of a nation's wealth is rare indeed. May we ask the royal brother to give his quick consent, so that we may report to our ruler?"

The elder however, became more dumb and deaf than ever. 8 Rules shouted sticking out his pestle-like horn, "Grand Preceptor go back and tell your ruler that my master happens to be an *Arhat* who's attained the Way after a long process of cultivation. He'll never fall in love with the dowry of a nation's wealth, nor will he be enamoured even with beauty that can topple an empire. You may as well certify the travel rescript quickly and send them off to the West. Let me stay here to be the live-in husband. How's that?"

When the Grand Preceptor heard this, her heart quivered and her gall shook, unable to answer at all. The clerk of the posthouse said, "Though you may be a male, your looks are hideous. Our ruler won't find you attractive."

"You're much too inflexible," said 8 Rules, laughing. "As the proverb says, *the thick willow's a basket, the thin, a barrel – who in the world will take a man as an ugly fellow?*"

Pilgrim said, "Idiot, stop this foolish talk. Let master make up his mind: if he wants to leave, let him leave, and if he wants to stay, let him stay. Let's not waste the time of the marriage go-between."

"Wukong," said Tripitaka, "What do you think I ought to do?"

"In old monkey's opinion," replied Pilgrim, "perhaps it's good that you stay here. As the ancients said, 'One thread can tie up a distant marriage.' Where will you ever find such a marvellous opportunity?"

Tripitaka said, "Disciple, if we remain here to dote on riches and glory who'll go to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven? Won't the waiting kill my emperor of the Great Tang?"

The Grand Preceptor said, "In the presence of the royal brother, your humble official dares not hide the truth. The wish of our ruler's only to offer you the proposal of marriage. After your disciples have attended the wedding banquet, provisions will be given them and the travel rescript will be certified so that they may proceed to the Western Heaven to acquire the scriptures."

"What the Grand Preceptor said is most reasonable," said Pilgrim, "and we need not be difficult about this. We're willing to let our master remain here to become the husband of your mistress. Certify our rescript quickly and send us off to the West. When we've acquired the scriptures, we'll return here to visit parents and ask for travel expenses so that we may go back to the Great Tang." Both the Grand Preceptor and the clerk of the posthouse saluted to Pilgrim as they said, "We thank this teacher for his kind assistance in concluding this marriage." 8 Rules said, "Grand Preceptor, don't use only your mouth to set the table! Since we've given our consent, tell your mistress to prepare us a banquet first. Let us have an engagement drink. How about it?"

"Of course! Of course!" said the Grand Preceptor. "We'll send you a feast at once."

In great delight, the Grand Preceptor left with the clerk of the posthouse. Elder Tang caught hold of Pilgrim immediately and berated him, crying, "Monkey head! Your tricks are killing me! How could you say such things and ask me to get married here while you people go to the Western Heaven to see God? Even if I were to die, I'd not dare do this."

"Relax, Master," said Pilgrim, "old monkey's not ignorant of how you feel. But since we've reached this place and met this kind of people, we've no alternative but to meet plot with plot."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Tripitaka.

Pilgrim said, "If you persist in refusing them, they will not certify our travel rescript nor will they permit us to pass through. If they grow vicious and order many people to cut you up and use your flesh to make those so-called fragrant bags, do you think that we'll treat them with kindness? We'll, of course, bring out our abilities that are meant to subdue demons and dispel fiends. Our hands and feet are quite heavy, you know, and our weapons ferocious. Once we lift our hands, the people of this entire nation will be wiped out. But you must think of this however. Although they are now blocking our path, they are no fiendish creatures or monster-spirits; all of them in this country are humans. And you've always been a man committed to kindness and compassion, refusing to hurt even one sentient being on our way. If we slaughter all these common folk here, can you bear it? That would be true wickedness."

When Tripitaka heard this, he said, "Wukong, what you've just said is most virtuous. But I fear that if the queen asks me to enter the palace, she will want me to perform the conjugal rite with her. How could I consent to lose my original *yang* and destroy the virtue of Religion, to leak my true sperm and fall from the humanity of our faith?"

"Once we've agreed to the marriage," said Pilgrim, "she will no doubt follow royal etiquette and send her carriage out of the capital to receive you. Don't refuse her. Take a ride in her phoenix carriage and dragon chariot to go up to the treasure hall, and then sit down on the throne facing south. Ask the queen to take out her imperial seal and summon us brothers to go into court. After you've stamped the seal on the rescript, tell the queen to sign the document also and give it back to us. Meanwhile, you can tell them to prepare a huge banquet; call it a wedding feast as well as a farewell party for us. After the banquet, ask for the chariot once more on the excuse that you want to see us off outside the capital before you return to consummate the marriage with the queen. In this way, both ruler and subjects will be duped into false happiness; they will no longer try to block our way, nor will they have any cause to become vicious. Once we reach the outskirts of the capital, you'll come down from the dragon chariot and Sand-monk will help you to mount the white horse immediately. Old monkey will then use his magic of immobility to make all of them, ruler and subjects, unable to move. We can then follow the main road to the West. After one day and one night, I'll recite a spell to recall the magic and release all of them so that they can wake up and return to the city. For one thing, their lives will be preserved, and for another, your primal soul will not be hurt. This is a plot called *Fleeing the Net* by a False Marriage. Isn't it a doubly advantageous act?"

When Tripitaka heard these words, he seemed as if he were snapping out of a stupor or waking up from a dream. So delighted was he that he forgot all his worries and thanked Pilgrim profusely, saying, "I'm deeply grateful for my worthy disciple's lofty intelligence."

And so the 4 of them were united in their decision. That Grand Preceptor and the clerk of the posthouse who dashed inside the gate of the court without even waiting for summons and went before the white-jade steps. "The auspicious dream of our mistress is most accurate," they cried, "and nuptial bliss will soon be yours." When the queen heard this report, she had the pearly screen rolled up; descending from the dragon couch, she opened her cherry lips to reveal her silvery teeth and asked, full of smiles and in a most seductive voice, "What did the royal brother say after our worthy subjects saw him?"

"After your subjects reached the posthouse," said the Grand Preceptor, "and saluted to the royal brother, we immediately presented to him our proposal of marriage. The royal brother still expressed some reluctance but it was fortunate that his eldest disciple gave his consent for them without hesitation. He was willing to let his master become the husband of our ruler and call himself king, facing south. All he wanted was to have their travel rescript certified so that the three of them could leave for the West. On their way back after acquiring the scriptures, they'll come here to salute parents and ask for travel expenses to go back to the Great Tang."

"Did the royal brother say anything more?" asked the queen, smiling.

The Grand Preceptor said, "The royal brother did not say anything more but he seemed to be willing to marry our mistress. His second disciple however, wanted to drink to their consent first."

When the queen heard this, she at once ordered the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a banquet. She also requested that her imperial cortege be readied so that she might go out of the capital to receive her husband. The various women officials, in obedience to the queen's command, began to sweep and clean the palaces and to prepare the banquet with the utmost haste. Look at them! Though this State of Western Liang happens to be a dominion of women, the carriage and chariot are not less opulent than those of China. See *6 dragons belching colours – 2 phoenixes bringing luck – 6 dragons, belching colours, support the chariot; 2 phoenixes, bringing luck, and lift up the carriage. Strange fragrance in endless waves; auspicious airs continuously rise. Fish-pendants of gold or jade worn by many ministers; rows and rows of lovely locks and bejewelled hair. A royal carriage shielded by mandarin-duck fans; through pearly screens glisten the phoenix hairpins. Melodic pipes,*

harmonious strings. What great sense of joy reaching to the sky! What boundless bliss leaving the Estrada Numina. <sup>5</sup>3-layered canopies wave above the royal house; 5-coloured banners light up the imperial steps. This land has never seen the nuptial cup exchanged; today the queen marries a gifted man. In a moment, the imperial cortege left the capital and arrived at the Male Reception Posthouse. Someone went inside to announce to Tripitaka and his disciples: “The imperial cortege has arrived.” On hearing this, Tripitaka straightened out his clothes and left the main hall with the three disciples to meet the carriage. As the queen rolled up the screen to descend from the carriage, she asked, “Which’s the royal brother of the Tang court?” Pointing with her ringer, the Grand Preceptor said, “The one in a clerical robe standing behind the incense table outside the posthouse gate.” Lifting her moth-brows and opening wide her phoenix-eyes, the queen stared at him and found that this was an uncommon figure indeed. Look at him! *What handsome features! What dignified looks! Teeth white like silver bricks, ruddy lips and a square mouth. His head’s flat-topped, his forehead, wide and full; lovely eyes, neat eyebrows, and a chin that’s long. 2 well-rounded ears betoken someone brave. He is all elegance, a gifted man. What a youthful, clever, and comely son of love, worthy to wed Western Liang’s gorgeous girl!* Utterly ravished by what she saw, the queen was swept away by amorous passion. Opening her tiny, cherry-like mouth, she cried out: “Royal brother of the Great Tang, aren’t you coming to take and ride the phoenix?” When Tripitaka heard these words, his ears turned red and his face, scarlet; filled with embarrassment, he dared not lift his head at all. On one side however, Bullseye 8 Rules stuck up his horn and stared with glassy eyes at the queen who was quite beguiling herself. Truly she had *brows like kingfisher hair and flesh like mutton jade. Peach petals bedeck her face; her bun piles gold-phoenix hair. Her eyes’ cool, liquid gaze – such seductive charm. Her hands’ young, tender shoots – such dainty form. Colours flutter from a red sash hung aslant; bright gleams flash forth from jade and pearl pinned high. Don’t speak of the beauty of Zhao-Jun, she indeed surpasses even Xi Shi.* <sup>6</sup>*The willow waist bends slightly to gold-pendant sounds; the light, lotus steps move the jade-like limbs. The lunar goddess cannot come up to her, nor can the maids of Heaven compare with her. Her fair, palace style’s not of a worldly school; she’s like Queen Mum from Jasper Pool.* As Idiot gazed at this pleasing figure, he could not restrain the saliva from drooling out of his mouth and the deer pounding at his heart. *All at once, he grew weak and numb and simply melted away like a snow lion faced with fire!* The queen went forward and caught hold of Tripitaka. In a most seductive voice, she said, “Royal brother darling, please ascend the dragon chariot so that we may go to the Treasure Hall of Golden Chimes and become husband and wife.” Shaking so hard that he could barely stand up, our elder behaved as if he were drunk or mesmerized. Pilgrim on one side whispered to him, “Master, don’t be too modest. Please get in the carriage with our mistress. Go and have our rescript certified quickly so that we may proceed to fetch the scriptures.” The elder dared not reply; he tugged at Pilgrim a couple of times and he could no longer stop the tears from falling down. “Master, you mustn’t be distressed,” said Pilgrim. “Look at all these riches! If you don’t enjoy them now when’re you going to do it?” Tripitaka had little alternative but to acquiesce. Wiping away his tears, he forced himself to appear happy and joined the queen as they *holding hands together, rode the dragon carriage. In great delight the queen wanted to get married; in great fear the elder wished only to worship God. 1 desired amorous play in the bridal chamber; 1 sought to see the World-Honoured 1 at Mount Spirit. The queen was sincere; the monk pretended, the queen was sincere, hoping to reach old age in harmony. The monk pretended, guarding his feelings to nurse his primal spirit. 1 was so glad to see a man that she would couple with him in broad daylight. 1 dreaded to meet a woman and thought only to flee and go to Thunderclap. The 2 mounted jointly the chariot. Who knew Tang Monk was of another mind!* When those civil and military officials saw that their ruler and the Tang Monk had ascended the phoenix carriage and sat side by side together, every one of them beamed with pleasure. The entire entourage turned around and went back into the capital. Meanwhile, the Great Sage Sun told Sand-monk to pole the luggage and lead the white horse to follow the imperial cortege. Bullseye 8 Rules however, scurried ahead and ran madly up to the Tower of Five Phoenixes first, shouting all the while, “What comfort! What an opportunity! But this can’t be done until we’ve drunk the wedding juice and presented ourselves to the kinfolk first.” Those officials who were attending the cortege were so terrified that they went to the chariot and said, “My Lady, that monk who’s a long horn and huge ears is shouting in front of the Five Phoenix Towers for wedding juice to drink.” When the queen heard this, she leaned her fragrant shoulder over to the elder and put her peach-like cheeks up to his face. Opening her scented mouth, she said softly, “Royal brother darling that disciple of yours is that one with a long horn and huge ears?” “He’s my second disciple,” said Tripitaka, “and he has a huge appetite. In fact, he loves to indulge his mouth throughout his life. He must be given some food and drink first before we can proceed with our business.” The queen asked hurriedly, “Has the Court of Imperial Entertainments finished preparing the banquet?” “It has,” reported one of the officials. “There are both meat and vegetarian dishes set up in the East Hall.” “Why both?” asked the queen again. “We fear that the royal brother of the Tang court,” said the official, “and his disciples are accustomed to keeping a vegetarian diet. That is why we’ve both meat and vegetarian dishes.” Full of smiles, the queen again snuggled close to the elder and said, “Royal brother darling, do you eat meat, or are you keeping a vegetarian diet?” Tripitaka said, “This humble priest observes a vegetarian diet but my disciples have not abstained from juice. My second disciple would like very much to have a few cups of dietary juice.” They had not finished speaking when the Grand Preceptor approached them and said, “Please go to the East Hall<sup>7</sup> to attend the banquet. Today is an auspicious day, and Your Majesty can marry the venerable royal brother. Tomorrow Heaven will reveal the Yellow Road<sup>8</sup> and we’ll invite the venerable royal brother to ascend the treasure hall and face south. He can then designate the name of his reign and assume the throne.” Highly pleased, the queen held hands with the elder to descend from the dragon chariot and enter the main palace gate. They were met by *poems divine, wind-wafted from the towers as the jade carriage moved through palace gates. Phoenix doors flung wide to bright flares of light; the palace now opened with rows of brocade. The unicorn hall was draped over by incense smoke; bright corridors wound round the peacock screens. Towers rose rugged like the noble states with jade halls, gold horses more wondrous still. When they reached the East Hall, they heard a choir of melodious strings and pipes; they saw 2 rows of winsome, graceful maids.* 2 kinds of sumptuous repast were set up in the central hall: on the head table to the left was the vegetarian spread whereas meat dishes were placed on the right. Two rows of single tables were also set up toward the front of the hall. Rolling up her sleeves to reveal her dainty, pointed fingers, the queen immediately picked up a jade cup to toast her guests. Pilgrim went forward to say, “We’re all keeping a vegetarian diet. Let our master be seated at the head table on the left. Then we three brothers may take the single tables on both sides of him.” “Yes! Yes!” said the Grand Preceptor in delight. “Master and disciples are just like dad and sons. They should not sit side by side.” The various officials hurriedly set up the tables in proper order, after which the queen toasted each of them as he took his seat. Thereafter, Pilgrim gave the Tang Monk a look, indicating to his master to return the salutation. Tripitaka, therefore, left his seat and, holding the jade goblet, also toasted the queen. The other civil and military officials all knelt to thank the imperial favour before they took the other seats on both sides according to their ranks. The poems stopped and they began to drink and eat. As 8 Rules was bent on satisfying his stomach, he had little regard for consequence. It did not matter that the food before him was corn, steamed breads, sweet pastries button mushrooms, black mushrooms, tender bamboo shoots, wood-ears, Chinese cabbage, seaweed, laver, green turnips, taros, white turnips, yams, or yellow sperms – in big gulps, he finished them all, washing down the food with seven or eight cups of juice. “Bring us more food!” he hollered. “Bring some big steins! After we drink a few more steins, each of us will attend to our business.” “Such a fine feast and you don’t want to enjoy some more?” asked Sand-monk. “What sort of business do you want to attend to?” With a laugh, Idiot said, “As the ancients said, *let the bow-maker make his bow, the arrow-maker his arrow.* At this time, those of us who want to take a wife may take a wife, and those of us who want to marry a husband may marry a husband. Those who want to acquire scriptures need to be on their way to acquire scriptures. We can’t let the coveted cup delay our affairs. Let’s have our rescript certified quickly. As the saying goes, *if the general doesn’t dismount, every man will go his own way.*” When the queen heard this, she asked for big cups, and the attendants quickly took out several parrot cups, cormorant-shaped ladles, gold beakers, silver chalices, glass goblets, crystal basins, Penglai bowls, and amber steins. They filled these with the mellowest of juices and all of the disciples drank a round. Tripitaka then rose from the table and saluted to the queen with hands folded, saying, “Your Majesty, thank you for this lavish feast. We’ve drunk quite enough. Please ascend the treasure hall and certify our rescript. While there is still light, let us send the three of them on their way.” The queen agreed. After the banquet had been dismissed, she led the elder by the hand up to the Hall of Golden Chimes and immediately wanted the elder to take the throne. “No! No!” said Tripitaka. “Just now the Grand Preceptor said that tomorrow would be the proper auspicious day, and only then would this poor monk dare assume the throne and call myself the man set apart. Today you’d use your seal on the rescript so that they may be sent away.” Again the queen agreed and sat down on the dragon couch. A golden high-backed chair was placed on the left of the couch for the Tang Monk to sit on. Then the disciples were asked to bring forth the travel rescript. After Sand-monk untied the wrap and took it out, the Great Sage presented the rescript with both hands to the queen. When she examined it, she found on the document the marks of nine treasure seals of the Great Tang Emperor, together with the seals of the Precious Image Kingdom, the Black Rooster Kingdom, and the Cart Slow Kingdom. After the queen had looked at the document, she said again, smiling seductively, “So royal brother darling also bears the name of Chen?” “That is the surname of my secular family,” said Tripitaka, “and my religious name is Xuanzang. Because the Tang emperor in his imperial kindness took me as his brother, he bestowed on me the name of Tang.” “Why is it,” asked the queen, “that the rescript does not contain the names of your disciples?” “My three mischievous disciples,” replied Tripitaka, “are not people from the Tang court.” “If they are not,” asked the queen once more, “how is it that they are willing to follow you on your journey?” “My eldest disciple,” answered Tripitaka, “comes from the Aolai Country in the East East-Videha Continent; the second disciple, from a village in Qoco in the West Aparagodāniya Continent; and the third, from the River of Flowing Sand. All three of them had transgressed the decrees of Heaven. The Nun Guanshiyin however, liberated them from their sufferings, as a result of which they were willing to make submission and hold fast the good. So that their merits might atone for their sins, they resolved to accompany me and protect me on my journey to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. Since they became my disciples when I was already on my way, their names therefore had not been recorded on the rescript.” “Let me add them on for you, all right?” asked the queen. Tripitaka replied, “Your Majesty may do as you please.” The queen asked at once for brush and ink; after the ink had been rubbed out and the brush nicely soaked in it, she wrote at the end of the rescript declaration the names of Sun Wukong, Bullseye Aware of Ability, and Sand Awakened to Purity. Then she took out her imperial seal with which she neatly stamped the rescript before she signed her own name. The document was passed down again to the Great Sage Sun who gave it to Sand-monk to put into the wrap. Picking up a tray of small pieces of gold and silver, the queen left the dragon couch to hand it to Pilgrim, saying, “Take this, the three of you, as travel money, and may you reach the Western Heaven at an early date. When you return after you’ve acquired the scriptures, we’ll have greater rewards for you.” Pilgrim said, “We’re those who have left the family, and we can’t accept gold or silver. There will be places on our way where we may beg for our living.” When the queen saw that he refused, she took out ten bales of silk brocade and said to Pilgrim, “Since you’re rushing away, there’s no time for measurement or sewing. Take this and have some clothes made on the way to protect you from the cold.” “Those who have left the family,” said Pilgrim, “are not permitted to wear silk brocade. We’ve cloth garments to cover our bodies.” When the queen saw that he refused again, she gave this order: “Take three pints of imperial rice, and you can use it for a meal on the road.” When 8 Rules heard the word “meal,” he at once accepted it and put the rice in the wrap. “Brother,” said Pilgrim, “the luggage is getting heavier. You’ve the strength to pole it?” “You’d not know,” chuckled 8 Rules, “but what’s good about rice is that it’s a product for daily consumption. One meal will finish it off.” They all pressed their palms together to thank the queen. Tripitaka said, “Let Your Majesty take the trouble to accompany this poor monk who will send them off outside the capital. Let me give them a few instructions so that they may leave for the West. I’ll return and then I can enjoy forever with Your Majesty riches and glory. Only without such burdens or cares can we enter into conjugal bliss.” The queen, of course, did not know that this was a trick, and she asked at once for the imperial cortege. Leaning her fragrant shoulder on Tripitaka, she ascended the phoenix carriage with him and proceeded to the west of the capital. At that time, all the people in the capital lined the streets with containers filled with clean water and urns with the finest incense. Wishing to see the cortege of the queen and the male form of the royal brother were all powdered faces and cloudlike hair; old and young, they crowded into the streets. In a moment, the imperial cortege went out of the capital and stopped before the western gate. After putting everything in order, Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk faced the imperial carriage and cried out in unison, “The queen need not go any further. We’ll take our leave now.” Descending slowly from the dragon chariot, the elder raised his hands toward the queen and said, “Please go back, Your Majesty, and let this poor monk go to acquire scriptures.” When the queen heard this, she paled with fright and tugged at the Tang Monk. “Royal brother darling,” she cried, “I’m willing to use the wealth of my entire nation to ask you to be my husband. Tomorrow you’ll ascend the tall treasure throne to call yourself king, and I’m to be your queen. You’ve even eaten the wedding feast. Why are you changing your mind now?” When 8 Rules heard what she said, he began to act as if he were delirious. Pouting his horn and flapping his ears wildly, he charged up to the carriage, shouting, “How could we monks marry a powdered skeleton like you? Let my master go on his journey!” When the queen saw that hideous face and ugly behaviour, she was scared out of her wits and fell back into the carriage. Sand-monk pulled Tripitaka out of the crowd and was just helping him to mount the horse when another girl dashed out from somewhere and shouted, “Royal brother Tang where’re you going? Let’s you and I make some love!” “You stupid hussy!” cried Sand-monk and whipping out his treasure staff, brought it down hard on the head of the girl. Suddenly calling up a cyclone, the girl carried away the Tang Monk with a loud whoosh and both of them vanished without a trace. *Alas!* Thus it was that *having just left the fair gender net, then the demon of love he met.*

The Great Sage Sun and Bullseye 8 Rules were about to use magic to render those women immobile when they heard the shouts of Sand-monk and the howl of the wind. They turned quickly to look, only to discover that the Tang Monk had vanished. "Who is it that has abducted Master?" asked Pilgrim, and Sand-monk said, "It's a girl. She called up a cyclone and whizzed Master away." When Pilgrim heard this, he leaped straight up to the edge of the clouds; using his hand to shade his eyes, he peered all around and found a roiling mass of wind and dust hurtling toward the northwest. "Brothers," he shouted to them down below, "mount the clouds quickly to pursue Master with me." 8 Rules and Sand-monk tied the luggage to the horse, and with a whoosh they all shot up to mid-air and left.

Those women of the State of Western Liang, ruler and subjects, were so terrified that they knelt on the ground, all crying, "So these are *Arhats* who can ascend to Heaven in broad daylight!" Then the officials said to the queen, "Let not our ruler be frightened or vexed anymore. The royal brother of Tang has to be a Religious monk who has attained the Way. Since none of us possesses true discernment, we'd not recognise these Chinese men for what they are and all our scheming have been wasted. Let our mistress ascend the carriage to go back to court."

The queen herself became quite embarrassed, and as she went back to the capital with all her officials. The Great Sage Sun with his 2 brothers trod on air and fog to give chase to that cyclone. In a little while, they came upon a tall mountain where they saw the dust had died down and the wind subsided. Not knowing where the fiend had gone to, the three brothers lowered their clouds and began to search for the way. It was then that they saw on the side of the mountain a huge slab of stone, all shiny and green, that looked like a screen. The three of them led the horse to the back of the screen and discovered two stone doors, on which there was in large letters the following inscription: Toxic Foe Mountain, Cave of the Lute. As he had always been rather stupid, 8 Rules immediately wanted to break down the doors with his rake but he was quickly stopped by Pilgrim. "Don't be so hasty, Brother," he said. "After we followed the cyclone here, we'd to search for a while before we found these doors. We don't even know the long and short of the matter. Suppose this is the wrong door. Won't your action offend the owner? I think the two of you'd look after the horse and wait in front of that stone screen. Let old monkey go inside to do some detection before we start anything."

Greatly pleased by what he heard, Sand-monk said, "Very good! This is what I call caution in recklessness, composure in urgency." So the 2 of them led the horse away. The Great Sage Sun meanwhile displayed his divine power: making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and with 1 shake of his body changed into a bee – truly agile and light. *Look at him! His thin wings go soft with wind; waist in sunlight is trim. A mouth once sweetened by flowers; a tail that stripe-toads has tamed. What merit in honey-making! How modest his home-returning!*

*A smart plan he now conceives to soar past both doors and eaves.* Crawling inside through a crack in the door, Pilgrim flew past the second-level door and came upon a flower arbour in the middle of which sat a female fiend. Attending her on both sides were several young girls dressed in coloured silk and with parted bangs on their foreheads. All of them appeared to be in a most pleasant mood, talking with great animation about something. Ever so lightly our Pilgrim flew up there and alighted on the trellis of the arbour. As he cocked his ear to listen, he saw two other girls with dishevelled hair walking up to the arbour, each holding a plate of steaming hot pastries. "Madam," they said, "on this plate are buns stuffed with human flesh and on the other buns stuffed with red bean paste."

"Little ones," said the female fiend with a giggle, "help the royal brother of Tang to come out." The girls dressed in coloured silk went to one of the rear chambers and led the Tang Monk out by his hands. The master's face however, had turned yellow and his lips, white; his eyes were red and brimming with tears. "Master has been poisoned!" sighed Pilgrim to himself.

The fiend walked out of the arbour and extended her dainty, spring-onion-like fingers to catch hold of the elder, saying, "Relax, royal brother! Though our place here is not like the palace of the Western Liang State of Women and cannot compare with their wealth and luxury, it is actually less hectic and more comfortable. You'll find it perfect for reciting the name of God and reading scriptures. I'll be your companion on the Way, and we'll enjoy a harmonious union until old age." Tripitaka would not utter a word. "Stop worrying," said the fiend again. "I know that you didn't eat much when you attended the banquet in the State of Women. Here are two kinds of flour goods, meat and vegetarian, and you may take whatever you want, just to calm your fear."

Tripitaka thought to himself, "I can remain silent and refuse to eat anything but this fiend is not like the queen. The queen, after all, is a human being whose action is governed by propriety. This fiend is a monster-spirit most capable of hurting me. What shall I do? I wonder if my three disciples know that I'm held in custody here. If she does harm me because of my stubbornness, wouldn't I've thrown away my life?" As he questioned his mind with mind like that, he had no alternative but to force himself to open his mouth. "What's the meat made of and what the vegetarian's made of?" he asked. The fiend said, "The meat bun has human flesh stuffing while the vegetarian has red bean paste stuffing."

"This poor monk," said Tripitaka, "keeps a vegetarian diet."

"Girls," said the female fiend, giggling, "bring us some hot tea so that the elder of your household can eat the vegetarian buns."

One of the girls brought out a cup of fragrant tea and placed it in front of the elder. Picking up a vegetarian bun, the fiend broke it in half and handed the pieces to Tripitaka who in turn took a meat bun and presented it whole to the fiend. "Royal brother," asked the fiend, laughing, "why didn't you break it first before you handed it to me?" Tripitaka pressed his palms together before he replied, "As someone who has left the family, I dare not break open food made with meat."

"If you as someone who has left the family dare not break open food made with meat," said the fiend, "how is it that you're willing to eat water pudding<sup>1</sup> the other day at the Child-and-Mum Stream? Having done that, do you still insist on eating red bean paste stuffing today?"

Tripitaka replied: *"At high tide a boat leaves quickly; in sand traps a horse trots slowly."*

Pilgrim on the trellis heard everything. Fearing that such banter might confound the real nature of his master, he could no longer contain himself. He revealed his true form at once and whipped out his iron rod. "Cursed beast!" he shouted. "You're so unruly!" When the female fiend saw him, she blew out immediately from her mouth a ray of misty light to cover up the entire arbour. "Little ones," she cried, "take away the royal brother!" Picking up a steel trident, she leaped out of the arbour and yelled, "Lawless simian rascal! How dare you sneak into my house and play Peeping Tom? Don't run away! Have a taste of your mama's trident!" Using the iron rod to parry her blows, the Great Sage fought back as he retreated.

The two of them fought their way out of the cave. 8 Rules and Sand-monk were waiting in front of the stone screen; when they saw the combatants emerging, 8 Rules hurriedly pulled the white horse out of the way, saying, "Sand-monk, you guard the horse and the luggage. Let Old bull go and help with the fight." Dear Idiot! Lifting high the rake with both his hands, he rushed forward and shouted, "Elder Brother, stay back! Let me beat up this bitch!" When the fiend saw 8 Rules approaching, she summoned up some more of her abilities. With one snort fire spurted out from her nostrils as smoke licked out from her mouth. She shook her body once and there were now three tridents dancing and thrusting in the air, wielded by who knows how many hands. As she charged like a cyclone into the fray, she was met by Pilgrim and 8 Rules on both sides.

"Sun Wukong," cried the fiend, "you've really no judgement! I recognise you but you can't recognise me. But even your Siddhartha at the Thunderclap Monastery's afraid of me. Two clumsy oafs like you, you think you'll get anywhere! Come on up, both of you and I'll give each of you a beating!"

This battle was such: *the female fiend's power expanded; the Monkey King's vigour increased. The Heavenly Reeds Marshal, striving for merit, wielded wildly his rake to show his vim. That one with many hands and fast tridents the misty light encircled; from these 2 – impulsive with strong weapons – foggy air rose up. The fiend wished only to seek a mate; the monk refused to leak his primal sperm. Yin and yang at odds would do battle now, each flaunting its might in this bitter strife. Quiet yin, to nourish being, quickened in lust; tranquil yang purged desires to guard its health. To these 2 parties thus came discord; a contest was waged by trident, rake, and rod. This one's rod was strong, the rake, more potent – nut the fiend's trident met them blow for blow. 3 unyielding ones before Mount Toxic Foe; 2 ruthless sides outside Cave of the Lute. That 1 was pleased to seize the Tang Monk for her spouse; these 2 with the elder resolved to seek true writ. To do battle they stirred up Heaven and Earth, fought till sun and moon darkened, and planets moved.* The 3 of them fought for a long time and no decision was reached. Leaping suddenly into the air, the female fiend resorted to the Horse-Felling Poisoned Stake and, unseen, gave the Great Sage a terrific stab on his head. "Oh, misery!" cried Pilgrim and at once fled in severe pain. When 8 Rules saw that the tide was turning, he too retreated with the rake trailing behind him. The fiend thus retrieved her tridents and returned in triumph. Gripping his head with brows contracted and face woe-laden, Pilgrim kept crying, "Horror! Horror!"

8 Rules went up to him and asked, "Elder Brother, how's it that when you're just enjoying the fight, you suddenly ran away whining up a storm?"

Pilgrim gripped his head and could only say, "It hurts! It hurts!"

"It must be your migraine," said Sand-monk. "No! No!" cried Pilgrim, jumping up and down. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "I didn't see that you're wounded. But now your head hurts. Why?"

"Lord, it's terrible!" said Pilgrim with a groan. "I was just fighting with her. When she saw that I was breaking through her defence with the trident, she suddenly leaped into the air. I don't know what kind of weapon it was that gave my head a stab but the pain is unbearable. That was why I fled."

"You've always bragged about that head of yours when things were quiet," said 8 Rules with a laugh, "saying that it has gone through such a long process of cultivation. How is it now that it can't even take a stab?"

"Indeed," replied Pilgrim. "Since I achieved the art of realised mortality, and since I stole and ate the mortal peaches, celestial juice, and the golden elixir of Laozi, this head of mine cannot be harmed. When I caused great disturbance in Heaven, the Jade Emperor sent the Demon King Powerful and the Twenty-Eight Constellations to take me outside the Dipper Star Palace and have me executed. What those divine warriors used on me were swords, axes, scimitars, bludgeons, thunderbolts, and fire. Thereafter Laozi placed me within his brazier of eight trigrams and smelted me for forty-nine days. But there wasn't even a scratch on my head. I don't know what sort of weapon this woman used today but she certainly wounded old monkey!"

"Take away your hands," said Sand-monk, "and let me see if the skin has been torn."

"No, it hasn't," replied Pilgrim.

"I'll go to the State of Western Liang and ask for some ointment to tape on you," said 8 Rules. Pilgrim said, "There's no swelling, and it's not an open wound. Why should you want to tape ointment on it?"

"Brother," said 8 Rules, chuckling, "I didn't come down with any pre- or postnatal illness but you're getting a brain tumour."

"Stop joking. Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk. "It's getting late! Big Brother's head's been hurt and we don't know whether Master's dead or alive. What'll we do?"

"Master's all right," said Pilgrim with a groan. "I changed into a bee to fly inside and found that woman sitting inside a flower arbour. In a little while, two maids brought out two plates of buns: one'd human flesh for stuffing and the other red bean paste. Then she asked two other maids to help Master out to eat just to calm his fear. She also said something about her desire to be Master's companion on the Way. Master said nothing to the woman at first, nor did he eat the buns. Later perhaps it's because of all her sweet talk or some other odd reason, he began to speak with her and told her that he kept a vegetarian diet. The woman broke one of those vegetarian buns into halves to hand to Master and he presented her with a meat one whole. 'Why didn't you break it?' the woman asked.

And Master said, 'Those who've left the family aren't break into something made with meat.'

'In that case,' asked the woman, 'how's it that you're willing to eat water pudding the other day? And you still insist on eating stuffing made of red bean paste?'

Master didn't quite understand her puns and he replied: *'At high tide a boat leaves quickly; in sand traps a horse trots slowly.'* I heard everything on the trellis and was afraid that Master's nature might be confounded. That's when I revealed my true form and attacked her with my iron rod. She, too used her magic power; blowing out some mist or fog to cover the arbour, shouted for the girls to take away the 'royal brother' before she picked up her steel trident and fought her way out of the cave with old monkey."

When Sand-monk heard this, he bit his finger and said, "We've been picked up and followed by this bitch from who knows where but she's certainly knowledge of what's happened to us recently."

"If you put it that way," said 8 Rules, "it looks as if we'd be unable to rest, doesn't it? Let's not worry if it's dusk or midnight. Let's go up to her door and provoke battle. At least our hubbub will prevent them from sleeping, so that she can't pull a fast one on our master."

"My head hurts," said Pilgrim. "I can't go!"

Sand-monk said, "No need to provoke battle. In the first place, Elder Brother's a headache and in the second, our master's a true monk. He'll not allow either form or emptiness to confound his nature. Let's sit here for the night beneath the mountain slope where there's no draft and regain our energy. Then we can decide what to do by morning."

And so the 3 brothers rested beneath the mountain slope after having tied up the white horse firmly, guarding the luggage. The female fiend banished violence from her mind and once again took on a pleasant appearance. "Little ones," she said, "shut the front and back doors tightly." 2 little fiends were instructed to stand watch against the intrusion of Pilgrim. If there were any sound at the door at all, they were told to report at once. Then she gave this order also: "Maids, fix up the bedroom nicely. After you've lit the candles and the incense, go and invite royal brother Tang to come here. I want to make love with him." They therefore brought out the elder from the rear. Putting on her most seductive charms, she caught hold of the Tang Monk and said, "As the proverb says, *our pleasure's more worthwhile though gold may have its price.* Let's you and I play spouses and have some fun!"

Gritting his teeth, our elder would not permit even a sound to escape from his mouth. He was about to refuse her invitation but he was afraid that she might decide to take his life. He had no alternative but to follow her into the perfumed room, trembling all the while. Completely in a stupor, he raised neither his eyes nor his head; he did not see what sort of coverlets or bedding there was in the room, nor was he eager to find out what kinds of furniture or dresser were placed therein. As for all the amorous declaration and sultry speech of the female fiend, he did not hear a word. *Marvellous monk! Truly his eyes saw no evil form; ears heard no lustful sound; he regarded as dirt and dung this coy, silken face, this pearl-like beauty as ashes and dust. His 1 love in life was to practice Chan, unwilling to step once beyond God-land. How'd I show affection and pity when all I know is religion and truth?*

That fiend, all vibrant with boundless passion; elder most deadpan and filled with Religious zeal. 1 was like soft jade and warm perfume; 1 seemed like cold ashes or dried wood. That person undid her collar, her passion overflowing; this person tied up his robe, his resolve unswerving. That 1 wanted to mate, breast to chest with thighs entwined; this 1 wished to face the wall and seek Awakening-



religion in the mount. The fiend loosened her clothes to display her fine, scented flesh; the Tang Monk bundled up his cloak to hide his coarse and thickset skin. The fiend said, "My sheets and pillows are ready, why don't you sleep!"

The Tang Monk said, "How'd my bald head and strange clothes join you there!"

That 1 said, "I'm willing to be the former period's Liu Cuicui."<sup>2</sup>

This 1 said, "This humble monk isn't a lovesick priest!"

The fiend said, "I'm pretty as Xi Shi and even more lissom."

The Tang Monk said, "Like King Yue I've long been mortified!"

The fiend said, "Royal brother, remember he who dies beneath the flowers; even his ghost's a happy lover."

The Tang Monk said, "My true yang is treasure most precious. How'd I give it to a powdered cadaver?"

The 2 of them prattled on like that deep into the night but the elder Tang showed no sign whatever that he had been aroused. Though the female fiend tugged and pulled at him and refused to let go, master doggedly rejected her advances. All this hassle made the fiend mad by midnight and she shouted, "Little ones, bring me a rope!" *Alas!*

The dearly beloved was at once trussed up until he looked like a shaggy ape! After telling her subordinates to drag the monk back to the corridor, she blew out the lamps and all of them retired.

Soon the cock crowed three times, and beneath the mountain slope Great Sage Sun rose up, saying, "I'd a headache for quite a while but now my head feels neither painful nor numb. In fact, I've a little itch."

"If you've an itch," chuckled 8 Rules, "how about asking her to give you another stab?" Pilgrim spat at him and said, "Go! Go! Go!" 8 Rules laughed again and replied, "Go! Go! Go! But it was Master last night who went wild! Wild! Wild!"

"Stop gabbing, the two of you," said Sand-monk. "It's light. Go quickly to catch the monster."

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "stay here to guard the horse and don't move. Bullseye 8 Rules will go with me."

Arousing himself, Idiot straightened out his black silk shirt and followed Pilgrim; they took their weapons and leaped up to the mountain ledge to go before the stone screen. "Stand here," said Pilgrim to 8 Rules, "for I fear that the fiend might have harmed Master during the night. Let me go inside to snoop around a bit. If Master truly had lost his primal *yang* and his virtue because of her deception, then all of us could scatter. If he has not been confounded and if his Chan mind has remained unmoved, then we'd in all diligence fight to the end, slaughter the monster-spirit, and rescue Master to go to the West."

"You're quite numb-skulled!" said 8 Rules. "As the proverb says, 'Could dried fish be used for a cat's pillows?' Like it or not, it would receive a few scratches!"

Pilgrim said, "Stop babbling! I'll go and see."

Dear Great Sage! He left 8 Rules in front of the stone screen and shook his body again to change into a bee. After he flew inside, he found two maids sleeping, their heads resting on the watch-rattles. He went up to the flower arbour to look around. The monster-spirit had struggled for half the night; she and her attendants were all very tired. Everyone was still fast asleep, not knowing that it was dawn already. Flying to the rear, Pilgrim began to hear the faint moans of the Tang Monk, and then he saw that the priest was left bull-tied in the corridor. Pilgrim gently alighted on his head and whispered, "Master." Recognising the voice, the Tang Monk said, "Have you come, Wukong? Save my life, quick!"

"How were the night's activities?" asked Pilgrim. Tripitaka, clenching his teeth, replied, "I'd rather die than do anything of that sort!"

"I thought," said Pilgrim, "I saw her showing you a good deal of tenderness yesterday. How is it that she is putting you through such torment today?"

"She pestered me for half the night," answered Tripitaka, "but I didn't even loosen my clothes or touch her bed. When she saw that I refused to yield to her, she had me tied up like this. Please rescue me, so that I can go acquire the scriptures." As master and disciples spoke to each other like that, they woke up the monster-spirit. Though she was furious at the Tang Monk, she was still very fond of him. When she stirred and heard something about going to acquire scriptures, she rolled off the bed at once and shouted: "You mean to tell me that you don't want to get married and still want to go and seek scriptures?"

Pilgrim was so startled that he abandoned his master, spread his wings, and flew out of the cave. "Eight Rules," he cried, and Idiot came around the stone screen, saying, "Has that thing been concluded?"

"Not yet! Not yet!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "She worked on the old master for quite some time but he refused. She got mad and had him bull-tied. He was just telling me all this when the fiend woke up, and I became so startled that I came back out here." 8 Rules asked, "What did Master actually say?"

"He said," replied Pilgrim, "that he did not even loosen his clothes nor did he touch her bed."

"Good! Very good!" chuckled 8 Rules. "He's still a true monk! Let's go rescue him!"

As he had always been a roughneck, Idiot did not wait for further discussion. Lifting high his muckrake, he brought it down on the stone doors with all his might, and with a loud crash they broke into many pieces. The two maids sleeping on the watch-rattles were so terrified that they ran back to the second-level door and screamed: "Open up! Those two ugly men of yesterday have come again and smashed our doors!" The female fiend was just leaving her room. "Little ones," she cried, "bring some hot water for me to wash my face. Carry the royal brother, all tied up like that, and hide him in the rear room. I'm going out to fight them."

Dear monster-spirit! She ran out with her trident uplifted and shouted: "Brazen ape! Wild bull! You don't know when to stop, do you? How dare you break my doors?"

"You filthy bitch!" scolded 8 Rules. "You've our master imprisoned, and you still dare to talk with such insolence? Our master was only your kidnapped husband! Send him out quickly, and I'll spare you.

If you dare but utter half a no, the blows of Old bull's rake will level even your mountain."

The monster-spirit, of course, did not permit such words to intimidate her. With enormous energy and using magic as before, she attacked with her steel trident while her nose and mouth belched fire and smoke. 8 Rules leaped aside to dodge her blow before striking back with his rake, helped by the Great Sage Sun and his iron rod on the other side. The power of that fiend was tremendous indeed! All at once she seemed to have acquired who knows how many hands, waving and parrying left and right. After they fought for several rounds, she again used some kind of weapon and gave the lip of 8 Rules a stab. His rake trailing behind him and his lips pouting, Idiot fled in pain for his life. Pilgrim also became somewhat envious of him; making one false blow with the rod, he, too, fled in defeat. After the fiend returned in triumph, she told her little ones to place rock piles in front of the door.

We now tell you about Sand-monk who was grazing the horse before the mountain slope when he heard some bull-grunting. As he raised his head, he saw 8 Rules dashing back, lips pouted and grunting as he ran. "What in the world...?" asked Sand-monk.

The Idiot blurted out: "It's awful! It's awful! This pain! This pain!" Hardly had he finished speaking when Pilgrim also arrived. "Dear Idiot!" he chuckled. "Yesterday you said I'd a brain tumour but now you're suffering from the plague of the swollen lip!"

"I can't bear it!" cried 8 Rules. "The pain's acute! It's terrible! It's terrible!"

The three of them were thus in sad straits when they saw an old woman approaching from the south on the mountain road, her left hand carrying a little bamboo basket with vegetables in it. "Big Brother," said Sand-monk, "look at that old lady approaching. Let me find out from her what sort of a monster-spirit this is and what kind of weapon she has that can inflict a wound like this."

"You stay where you're," said Pilgrim, "and let old monkey question her." When Pilgrim stared at the old woman carefully, he saw that there were auspicious clouds covering her head and fragrant mists encircling her body. Recognising all at once who she was, Pilgrim shouted, "Brothers, respect quickly! The lady is Nun!" Ignoring his pain, 8 Rules hurriedly went to his knees while Sand-monk bent low, still holding the reins of the horse. The Great Sage Sun, too, pressed his palms together and knelt down, all crying, "We submit to the great and compassionate, the efficacious saviour, Nun Guanshiyin."

When the Nun saw that they recognised her original light, she at once trod on the auspicious clouds and rose to mid-air to reveal her true form, the one which carried the fish basket. Pilgrim rushed up there also to say to her, saluting, "Nun, pardon us for not receiving you properly. We're desperately trying to rescue our master and we'd no idea that the Nun was descending to earth. Our present demonic ordeal is hard to overcome indeed, and we beg the Nun to help us."

"This monster-spirit," said the Nun, "is most formidable. Those tridents of hers happen to be two front claws, and what gave you such a painful stab is actually a stinger on her tail. It's called the Horse-Felling Poison, for she herself is a scorpion spirit. Once upon a time she happened to be listening to a lecture in the Thunderclap Monastery. When Siddhartha saw her, he wanted to push her away with his hand but she turned around and gave the left thumb of a god a stab. Even Siddhartha found the pain unbearable! When he ordered the *Arhats* to seize her, she fled here. If you want to rescue the Tang Monk, you must find a special friend of mine for even I can't go near her."

Saluting again, Pilgrim said, "I beg the Nun to reveal to whom it is that your disciple should go to ask for assistance."

"Go to the East Heaven Gate," replied the Nun, "and ask for help from the Star Lord Orionis<sup>3</sup> in the Luminescent Palace. He is the one to subdue this monster-spirit."

When she finished speaking, she changed into a beam of golden light to return to South Sea. Dropping down from the clouds, the Great Sage Sun said to 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "Relax, Brothers, we've found someone to rescue Master."

"From where?" asked Sand-monk.

Pilgrim replied, "Just now the Nun told me to seek the assistance of the Star Lord Orionis. Old monkey will go immediately."

With swollen lips, 8 Rules grunted, "Elder Brother, please ask a god for some medicine for the pain."

"No need for medicine," said Pilgrim with a laugh. "After one night, the pain will go away like mine."

"Stop talking," said Sand-monk. "Go quickly!"

Dear Pilgrim! Mounting his cloud somersault, he arrived instantly at the East Heaven Gate where he was met by the Deity-King Virūḥhaka. "Great Sage," said the Deity-King, saluting, "where are you going?"

"On our way to acquire scriptures in the West," replied Pilgrim, "the Tang Monk ran into another demonic obstacle. I must go to the Luminescent Palace to find the Star God of the Rising Sun." As he spoke, Tao, Zhang, Xin, and Deng, the four Grand Marshals, also approached him to ask where he was going. "I've to find the Star Lord Orionis," said Pilgrim, "and ask him to rescue my master from a monster-spirit." One of the grand marshals said, "By the decree of the Jade Emperor this morning, a god went to patrol the Star-Gazing Terrace."

"Is that true?" asked Pilgrim. "All of us humble warriors," replied Grand Marshal Xin, "left the Dipper Palace with him at the same time. Would we dare speak falsehood?"

"It has been a long time," said Grand Marshal Tao, "and he might be back already. The Great Sage should go to the Luminescent Palace first, and if he's not there, then you can go to the Star-Gazing Terrace."

Delighted, the Great Sage took leave of them and arrived at the gate of the Luminescent Palace. Indeed there was no one in sight and as he turned to leave, he saw a troop of soldiers approaching, followed by a god who still had on his court regalia made of golden threads. Look at *his cap of five folds ablaze with gold; court tablet of most lustrous jade. A 7-star sword, cloud patterned, hung from his robe; an 8-treasure belt, lucent, wrapped around his waist. His pendant jangled as if striking a verse; it rang like a bell in a strong gust of wind. Kingfisher fans parted and Orionis came as celestial fragrance the courtyard filled.* Those soldiers walking in front saw Pilgrim standing outside the Luminescent Palace and they turned quickly to report: "My lord, the Great Sage Sun's here."

Stopping his cloud and straightening his court attire, a god ordered the soldiers to stand on both sides in 2 rows while he went forward to salute his visitor, saying, "Why's the Great Sage come here?"

"I've come here," replied Pilgrim, "especially to ask you to save my master from an ordeal."

"Which ordeal," asked a god, "and where?"

"In the Cave of the Lute at the Toxic Foe Mountain," Pilgrim answered, "that's located in the State of Western Liang."

"What sort of monster's there in the cave," asked a god again, "that's made it necessary for you to call on this humble deity?"

Pilgrim said, "Just now the Nun Guanyin in her epiphany revealed to us that it was a scorpion spirit. She told us further that only you'd, sir, overcome it. That is why I've come to call on you."

"I'd first go back and report to the Jade Emperor," said a god, "but the Great Sage's already here, and you've moreover the Nun's recommendation. Since I don't want to cause you delay, I dare not ask you for tea. I'll go with you to subdue the monster-spirit first before I report to the throne."

When the Great Sage heard this, he at once went out of the East Heaven Gate with a god and sped to the State of Western Liang. Seeing the mountain ahead, Pilgrim pointed at it and said, "This is it." A god lowered his cloud and walked with Pilgrim up to the stone screen beneath the mountain slope. When Sand-monk saw them, he said, "Second Elder Brother, please rise. Big Brother has brought back the star god." His lips still pouting, Idiot said, "Pardon! Pardon! I'm ill, and I can't salute you."

"You're a man who practices self-cultivation," said the star god. "What kind of sickness do you've?"

"Earlier in the morning," replied 8 Rules, "we fought with the monster-spirit who gave me a stab on my lip. It still hurts."

The star god said, “Come up here, and I’ll cure it for you.” Taking his hand away from his horn, Idiot said, “I beg you to cure it, and I’ll thank you most heartily.” The star god used his hand to give 8 Rules’ lip a stroke before blowing a mouthful of breath on it. At once, the pain ceased. In great delight, Idiot went to his knees, crying, “Marvellous! Marvellous!” “May I trouble the star god to touch the top of my head also?” said Pilgrim with a grin. “You’re not poisoned,” said the star god. “Why should I touch you?” Pilgrim replied, “Yesterday, I was poisoned but after one night the pain is gone. The spot however, still feels somewhat numb and itchy, and I fear that it may act up when the weather changes. Please cure it for me.” The star god indeed touched the top of his head and blew a mouthful of breath on it. The remaining poison was thus eliminated, and Pilgrim no longer felt the numbness or the itch. “Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, growing ferocious, “let’s go and beat up that bitch!” “Exactly!” said the star god. “You provoke her to come out, the two of you, and I’ll subdue her.” Leaping up the mountain slope, Pilgrim and 8 Rules again went behind the stone screen. With his mouth spewing abuses and his hands working like a pair of fuel-gatherer hooks, Idiot used his rake to remove the rocks piled up in front of the cave in no time at all. He then dashed up to the second-level door, and one blow of his rake reduced it to powder. The little fiends inside were so terrified that they fled inside to report: “Madam, those two ugly men have destroyed even our second-level door!” The fiend was just about to untie the Tang Monk so that he could be fed some tea and rice. When she heard that the door had been broken down, she jumped out of the flower arbour and stabbed 8 Rules with the trident. 8 Rules met her with the rake while Pilgrim assisted him with his iron rod. Rushing at her opponents, the fiend wanted to use her poisonous trick again but Pilgrim and 8 Rules perceived her intentions and retreated immediately. The fiend chased them beyond the stone screen, and Pilgrim shouted, “Orionis where are you?” Standing erect on the mountain slope, the star god revealed his true form. He was actually a huge, double-combed rooster, about seven feet tall when he held up his head. He faced the fiend and crowed once: immediately the fiend revealed her true form that was that of a scorpion about the size of a lute. The star god crowed again, and the fiend whose whole body became paralysed, died before the slope. A testimonial poem for you says:

*Like tasselled balls his embroidered neck and comb with long, hard claws and angry, bulging eyes, he perfects the 5 Virtues forcefully; his 3 crows are done heroically.*

*No common, clucking fowl about the hut, he’s Heaven’s star showing his holy name.*

*In vain the scorpion seeks the human ways; she now her true, original form displays.*

8 Rules went forward and placed one foot on the back of the creature saying, “Cursed beast! You can’t use your Horse-Felling Poison this time!” Unable to make even a twitch, the fiend was pounded into a paste by the rake of the Idiot. Gathering up again his golden beams, the star god mounted the clouds and left while Pilgrim led 8 Rules and Sand-monk to salute the sky saying, “Sorry for all your inconvenience! In another day, we’ll go to your palace to thank you in person.” After the three of them gave thanks, they took the luggage and the horse into the cave where they were met by those maids who knelt on both sides to receive them. “Dads,” they cried, “we’re not fiends. We’re all women from the State of Western Liang who have been kidnapped by this monster-spirit some time ago. Right now your master is weeping in a scented room in the rear.” On hearing this, Pilgrim stared at them and saw that there was indeed no demonic aura about them. He therefore went to the rear, crying, “Master!” When the Tang Monk saw them, he was very pleased. “Worthy disciples,” he said, “I’ve caused you a lot of trouble. What happened to that woman?” “She was a huge female scorpion,” replied 8 Rules. “We’re fortunate to have received the revelation from the Nun Guanyin whereupon Big Brother went to Heaven to acquire the assistance of the Star Lord Orionis. He came here and subdued her, and she has been reduced to mud by Old bull. Only then did we dare walk in here to see your face.” The Tang Monk could not end his thanks to them. Then they found some rice and noodles with which they prepared a meal, after which they showed the way home to those girls who had been taken captive. Lighting up a fire, they burned out the entire cave-dwelling before they found the main road to the West once more. Thus it was that *they cut worldly ties to leave beauty and form; drained the gold sea to know the mind of Chan.*

056

Wild Spirit slays brutish bandits; Wayward Way sets loose Mind Monkey

The poem says:

*That mind<sup>1</sup> is called pure when it holds nothing – all quiet with not one thought arising.*

*Firmly restrain the monkey and the horse. Guard both spirit and sperm to stay on course.*

*Discard the 6 Robbers; awake to the 3 Wains; <sup>2</sup>causations halted, all things will be plain.*

*Depraved forms destroyed, to true realm you rise to sit and enjoy the Western paradise.<sup>3</sup>*

Tripitaka Tang who would have bitten through an iron nail with such grim determination, had managed to preserve his body from ruin. Moreover, he was fortunate enough to have had Pilgrim and his other assistants slaughter the scorpion spirit and rescue him from the Cave of the Lute. As they set out on their journey, it was the season of clear, clement weather again when *warm breezes oft wafted the wild-orchid scent; young bamboos cooled off as cleansing rain ceased. None picked the moxa leaves all over the hills; rush flowers filled the streams to display their hues. Bright pomegranates pleased the wandering bees. Yellow birds busted in the brook’s willow-shade. Rice-cakes<sup>4</sup> were not wrapped on a long journey though dragon boats now mourned at Miluo Stream.* As master and disciples enjoyed this scenery of the Double Fifth Festival season when the sun was high in the sky, they found once more a tall mountain blocking their path. Reining in his horse, the elder turned his head to address his disciples: “Wukong, there’s a mountain ahead of us. I fear that it may breed fiends. Please be careful.”

“Please don’t worry, Master,” replied Pilgrim. “We make submission to the faith in complete obedience. Why worry about fiends?” Delighted by what he heard, the elder urged his horse forward, and in a little while they arrived at a tall ledge on the mountain. This was what they saw as they looked around: *the peak’s pines and cedars join the clouds in blue; wild creepers hang on the cliff’s briars and thorns. 10000 feet, lofty –1000 tiers, sheer hanging – 10000 feet of lofty, rugged peak; 1000 tiers of sheer, hanging buff. Jade-green moss and lichen on dark rocks spread; large forests formed by tall junipers and elms. Deep in the forest, listen to the birds: their skilful voices make recital poems. The brooklet’s water flows like splashing jade; the roadside’s petals rest as mounds of gold. This wretched mount so hard to scale! Walk ten steps and not even one’s flat! Travellers meet in pairs the foxes and deer; they face in 2s both black apes and white fawns. All at once there’s a fearsome tiger-roar or the crane-cry that reaches Heaven’s court. Yellow plums, red apricots make worthy fruits; wild grass and flowers are of name unknown.* The 4 of them entered the mountain and journeyed slowly for a long time. After they passed the summit, they went down the west slope until they came to a piece of level ground. Attempting to show off his energy, Bullseye 8 Rules asked Sand-monk to pole the luggage while he raised high his muckrake with both his hands and went forward to drive the horse. The horse however, was not at all afraid of him; though 8 Rules whooped and hollered, he kept on trotting slowly. “Brother,” said Pilgrim, “why are you driving him? Let him walk slowly.”

“It’s getting late,” answered 8 Rules, “and we’ve been walking for a whole day since we ascended this mountain. I’m getting hungry. Let’s hurry and see if we can find a house where we can beg some food.” When Pilgrim heard this, he said, “In that case, let me make him run.” He waved the golden-hooped rod once and gave a shout: immediately, the horse shot away like an arrow on the level road. For what reason, you say, is the horse afraid of Pilgrim and not of 8 Rules? Pilgrim was appointed an official, the title being Ban-Horse-Plague, at the Imperial stable in Heaven by the Jade Emperor five centuries ago. Ever since that time, horses have been afraid of apes. Unable to hang on to the reins, our elder at this moment could only cling to the saddle and allow the horse to go in a gallop some twenty miles before it slowed again as it came upon some open fields.

At that moment, a sudden clang of gongs brought out from both sides of the road some thirty men, all armed with spears, scimitars, staffs, and rods. They barred the way and cried, “Monk! Where are you off to?” The Tang Monk was so terrified and shaking so violently that he fell down from the horse. Crouching in the bushes by the road, he could only say, “Great kings, spare me! Please spare me!”

2 burly men at the head of the band said, “We’ll not hit you but you must leave us your travel money.” Only then did the elder realise that these were bandits. As he got up slowly, he stole a glance at them and saw that *1 had a green face with fangs beating Jupiter’s; 1 had round and bulging eyes like Death himself. Their temples’ red hair seemed like soaring flames; like pins stuck to their chins were their yellow beards. The 2 had striped tiger-skin caps on their heads and sable battle kilts around their waists. 1 held in his hands a wolf-teeth club and on 1’s shoulder rested a knotty staff. Indeed, this 1 was no less than a hill-pawing tiger! Truly, that one looked like a dragon darting out of water!* When he saw how ferocious they were, Tripitaka had no choice but to get up, and pressing his palms together before him, he said, “Great kings, this humble priest is someone sent by the Tang emperor in the Land of the East to go to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. Since I left our capital, Chang’an, it has been many years; even if I’d any travel money, I’ve long spent it. Those of us who have left the family live by begging. Where do I’ve cash? I beg the great kings to be kind and let this humble priest pass through.”

The 2 bandit chiefs drew near and said, “We’ve resolved to stand guard by this main road like a tiger with the sole intention of picking up some cash or money. What do you mean by kindness? If you don’t have any money, take off your clothes quickly and leave us the white horse, too. We’ll let you pass then.”

“Infinite Light!” replied Tripitaka. “The robe on this poor priest’s been made from cloth begged from one family and needles from another. It’s a garment in fact that’s come from patchwork begging! Wouldn’t it be just like killing me if you stripped me of it? You might be valiant men in this life but you might become beasts in the next.”

Angered by what he heard, 1 of the bandits wielded a big rod and wanted to hit the elder who did not say a word but thought to himself, “Alas! Now you boast of your rod but you’ve little idea of my disciple’s rod!” The bandit, of course, did not permit any further discussion; lifting his rod, he started to shower the elder with blows. Now, our elder had never lied in his life before but faced with such a dilemma, he had no choice but to mouth falsehood. “Please do not raise your hands, great kings, both of you,” he said. “I’ve a young disciple who should arrive any moment. He has on him several ounces of silver that I’ll be glad to give to you.”

“This monk,” said the bandit, “can’t take any pain. Let’s tie him up.”

His followers acted at once and bound their victim with a rope, after which he was hung high on a tree. Now about those three rowdy troublemakers who were chasing the horse from behind. Laughing uproariously, 8 Rules said, “Master has gone off so quickly! I wonder where he’s waiting for us.” Then he caught sight of the elder hanging on a tree in the distance, and he said, “Look at master! He should have just waited for us. But no, he’s so spirited that he has to climb a tree for fun, swinging back and forth on a vine!” When Pilgrim saw that, he said, “Idiot, don’t babble! Isn’t master being hung up there? The two of you stay back, and let me go take a look.” Dear Great Sage! He jumped up to a knoll nearby, and when he stared in front of him, he recognised at once that there was a group of bandits. Secretly pleased, he thought to himself: “Lucky! Lucky! Business is at the door!” Walking down from the knoll, he changed with one shake of his body into a young priest wearing a clerical robe. He was only about sixteen years old, and he had a blue cloth-wrap on his shoulder. In big strides, he came up to where his master was, crying, “Master, what do you’ve to say for yourself? Who are these bad men?”

“O disciple,” replied Tripitaka, “aren’t you going to rescue me? Why all these questions?”

“What sort of business are they engaged in?” asked Pilgrim. Tripitaka replied, “They are highwaymen; they barred my way and asked for toll money. As I’d nothing on me, they tied me up and hung me here. They are waiting for you to show up to finish the discussion with them. If nothing works, we may have to give them this horse of ours.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim chuckled and said, “Master, you’re so weak! There are many monks in the world but few are as thin-skinned as you. The Tang emperor, Taizong, sent you to see God in the Western Heaven. But who told you to give away this dragon horse?”

“O disciple!” said Tripitaka. “They’ve already tied me up like this. If they want to beat me for fun, what shall I do?”

“What did you say to them anyway?” asked Pilgrim. “They threatened me with beatings,” said Tripitaka, “until I’d no choice but to make a confession about you.”

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “you’re such a lark! What kind of confession did you make about me?” Tripitaka replied, “I said that you had some travel money, just to make them stop hitting me. It was something to get me out of a jam.”

“Fine! Fine! Fine!” said Pilgrim. “Thanks for doing me this favour! That’s exactly the sort of confession about me I want! If you can make it seventy or eighty times a month, old monkey will have lots of business.”

When those bandits saw him chatting with his master like that, they spread out and had them entirely surrounded. “Little monk,” 1 of them said. “Your master told us that you’d some travel money. Take it out quickly and your lives will be spared. If you but utter half a no, both of you’ll die on the spot!”

Putting down his cloth wrap, Pilgrim said, “Officers, don’t make a clamour! There is some travel money, not much, in this wrap: about twenty shoes of gold and perhaps thirty ingots of polished silver. I’ve not made a count of the small change. If you want it, take the wrap, too but please don’t hit my master. As an ancient book says: *virtue’s fundamental; riches are accidental.* What you want is really the most peripheral thing. We’re those who’ve left the family and there’ll be other places for us to beg. When we run into some aged person who wishes to feed and supply the monks, we’ll have allowances and we’ll have clothing. How much can we use or spend? I just hope that you’ll release my master and I’ll offer you everything.”

When those bandits heard these words, they were most pleased, all saying, “That old monk’s so stingy but this young one is quite generous.”

1 of the chiefs gave this command: “Release him!”

When that elder got his life again, he leaped on the horse; without another thought for Pilgrim, he took whip in hand and headed straight back on the road from which he came. “You’re going the wrong way!” shouted Pilgrim hurriedly.

Picking up his wrap, he gave chase at once only to be barred by the bandits. “Where do you think you’re going?” said the bandit leader. “Put your money down before I start the torture!”

“As I was saying,” chuckled Pilgrim, “the travel money ought to be divided into three portions.”

“This young priest,” said a bandit chief, “is pretty cagey! Now he wants to keep a little for himself after his master’s gone. All right! Take it out first and let’s have a look. If there’s enough, we’ll let you’ve a tiny bit – so that you can buy some goodies to eat when you’re by yourself.”

“Oh, dear elder brother,” said Pilgrim, “that’s not what I meant. You think I really have travel money? What I meant was, that gold and silver you robbed from other people you must divide with me.”

When the thief heard this, he became enraged. “This monk doesn’t know what’s good for him!” he hollered. “You’re not willing to give me nothing, and you ask me instead for something? Bah! Watch the beating!” He raised up his knotty staff and gave the bald head of Pilgrim seven or eight blows but Pilgrim behaved as if nothing whatever had happened. “Dear elder brother,” he said, full of smiles, “if that’s how you hit people, you can hit me until next spring and I’ll not consider you doing it for real.” Horrified, the bandit said, “This monk has quite a hard head!”

“Hardly! Hardly!” said Pilgrim, chuckling. “You praise me too much! It’s just passable!” Without permitting further discussion, two more of the bandits joined their leader and started to shower blows on Pilgrim. “Please calm your anger, all of you,” said Pilgrim. “Let me take out something.”

Dear Great Sage! He gave his ear a rub and brought out a tiny embroidery needle. “Sirs,” he said, “I’m someone who has left the family, and I’ve not any travel money with me. I’ve only this needle that I’ll be glad to give to you.”

“What rotten luck!” said the bandit. “We released a wealthy priest and we’ve caught instead this poor, bald ass! You must be quite good at tailoring. I suppose. What do I need a needle for?”

When Pilgrim heard that he did not want the needle, he waved it once in his hand and it changed immediately into a rod with the thickness of a rice bowl. Growing fearful, the bandit said, “Though this monk appears to be young, he knows magic.” Sticking the rod into the ground, Pilgrim said to them, “If any of you can pick it up, it’s yours.” The two bandit chiefs at once went forward to try to grab it but alas, it was as if dragonflies were attempting to shake a stone pillar. They could not even budge it half a whit! This rod happened to be the compliant golden-hooped rod that tipped the scale in Heaven at thirteen thousand, five hundred pounds. How could those bandits have knowledge of this? The Great Sage walked forward and picked up the rod with no effort at all. Assuming the style of the Python Rearing its Body, he pointed at the bandits and said, “Your luck’s running out, for you’ve met old monkey!” One of the bandit chiefs approached him and gave him another fifty or sixty blows. “Your hands must be getting tired!” chuckled Pilgrim. “Let old monkey give you one stroke of the rod. I’ll not do it for real either!” Look at him! One wave of the rod and it grew to about seventy feet, its circumference almost as big as a well. He banged it on the bandit, and he at once fell to the ground: his lips hugging the earth, he could not make another sound.

The other bandit chiefs shouted, “This baldy is so audacious! He has no travel money but he has killed one of us instead!”

“Don’t fret! Don’t fret!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “I’ll hit every one of you, just to make sure that all of you’ll be wiped out!”

With another bang he beat to death the other bandit chief. Those small thieves were so terrified that they abandoned their weapons and fled for their lives in all directions. The Tang Monk rode toward the east and was caught by 8 Rules and Sand-monk. “Master,” they said, “where are you going? You’re heading in the wrong direction.”

The elder pulled in his reins, saying, “Oh, disciples, go quickly and tell your elder brother to be merciful with his rod. Tell him not to kill all those bandits.”

“Master, stay here,” said 8 Rules, “and let me go.” Idiot ran all the way back to the spot, shouting, “Elder Brother, Master tells you not to hit people.”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “since when have I hit any people?”

“Where did those bandits go?” asked 8 Rules. Pilgrim replied: “All of them have scattered but there are two of them sleeping here.”

“Plague on you two!” said 8 Rules with a laugh. “You must have been up all night, if you can take hardship like this! Why not go elsewhere? Of all places, you’ve to sleep here!”

Idiot walked up to them and took a closer look. “They are just like me,” he said, “sleeping soundly with their mouths open, they are drooling just a little.”

“One stroke of old monkey’s rod,” said Pilgrim, “has brought out their bean curd!”

“How could there be bean curd in people’s heads?” asked 8 Rules. Pilgrim replied, “I beat their brains out!”

On hearing this, 8 Rules ran back hurriedly to say to the Tang Monk, “They’ve disbanded!”

“My goodness! My goodness!” said Tripitaka. “Which road did they take?”

8 Rules said, “They have been beaten until their legs are stiff and straight. You think they can walk somewhere?”

“Why, then, did you say that they have disbanded?” asked Tripitaka.

“They have been beaten to death!” said 8 Rules. “Isn’t that disbanding?”

“How do they look now?” asked Tripitaka again.

8 Rules said, “Two gaping holes in their heads.”

“Untie the wrap,” said Tripitaka, “and take out a few pennies. Go somewhere quickly and see if you can buy two tapes with ointment to tape them up.”

“You’re not serious,” said 8 Rules, laughing. “Ointment can be taped on living people for their sores or boils. How could you cure the gaping holes of dead men?”

“Are they really beaten to death?” asked Tripitaka, and he became terribly upset, so much so that he began to berate Pilgrim under his breath, calling him wretched ape and miserable simian as he turned around the horse. Soon, he and his two disciples arrived at the spot where they found two bloody corpses lying beneath the mountain slope.

Unable to bear the sight, the elder at once commanded 8 Rules: “Use your muckrake quickly and dig a hole to bury them. I’ll recite for them a scroll of scripture for the dead.”

“You’ve asked the wrong man, Master,” said 8 Rules. “It was Pilgrim who killed these people, and he should be asked to bury them. Why do you make Old bull the grave-digger?” Pilgrim however, was irritated by his master’s castigations, and therefore he shouted at 8 Rules, “You lazy coolie! Bury them quickly! A little tardiness and you, too, will get the rod!” Horrified, Idiot began digging at once beneath the slope. After the hole had reached a depth of about three feet, rocks and boulders in the ground resisted the rake. Abandoning his tool, Idiot resorted to his horn to remove the rocks. When he hit the soft element again, one shove of his horn took away about two and a half feet of dirt and two shoves created a hole of about five feet. Thus the two bandits were buried and a mound was raised. “Wukong,” Tripitaka called out, “bring me some incense and candles, so that I may say a prayer and recite the scriptures.”

“What silliness!” said Pilgrim, pouting, “Halfway up this mountain when there’s no village in front and no store behind us where can I ask for incense and candles? There’s no place for us to buy some even if we’ve the money.”

“Move aside, ape head!” said Tripitaka spitefully. “Let me pinch some dirt to use as incense and then I’ll pray.” And so *Tripitaka left the saddle to mourn at a rustic grave; the sage monk in kindness prayed to a lonely mound.* This was his supplication: “I salute you noble ones, listen to all my reasons: have regard for this student from the East a Tang person. The emperor Taizong by his own decree to fetch scripture texts from the West sent me. I came to this very place and met you all face to face – natives of some prefecture or some district who’ve formed a gang on this hilly place. With good words and kind I begged you earnestly but you’d not change your mind and instead grew so angry. When you met up with Pilgrim, two of you fell by his rod. I pity greatly your corpses exposed and cover you with mound full of sod. I break bamboo for candles – though lightless, they mean well. I take stones for offerings; though tasteless, truth they tell. If you’d protest at the Hall of Darkness and dig up the past, remember that his name’s Sun and my name’s Chen. A wrong’s its wrongdoer and a debt its creditor. Please don’t accuse this scripture seeker!”

“Master,” said 8 Rules, chuckling, “you’ve neatly passed the buck! But when he hit these people, we’re not around either.”

Tripitaka indeed scattered another pinch of dirt and prayed: “Noble ones, when you file suit, file it against Pilgrim only. 8 Rules and Sand-monk have nothing to do with this.” When the Great Sage heard these words, he could no longer refrain from snickering. “Master,” he said, “there’s not much kindness in you, is there? Because of your enterprise of seeking scriptures, I don’t know how much energy or exertion I’ve spent. Now I’ve slaughtered these two crummy thieves, and you tell them instead to go file suit against old monkey. Though it was I who raised my hands to kill them, I did it only for you. If you hadn’t resolved to go to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven, and if I’d not become your disciple, how could I end up killing people at this place? Now that you’ve said all those things, I might as well give them a little benediction!” He lifted up his iron rod and pounded it three times on the grave mound, saying, “You plague-ridden bandits! Listen to me! You gave me seven whacks here and eight whacks there with your rods, beating me until I was sorely annoyed because your blows caused me neither itch nor pain. So, I made the mistake of beating you to death. You may go anywhere you like to file suit against me but old monkey is not afraid. *The Jade Emperor knows me; the Deity-Kings follow me; the Twenty-Eight Constellations fear me; the Nine Luminaries are afraid of me; the prefectural, district, and municipal deities kneel before me; equal to Heaven, the guardian of Mount Tai dreads me; the Ten Kings of Hell once served as my attendants; the Five Grand Deities<sup>5</sup> have been my houseboys; whether they be Five Bureaus of the Three Realms<sup>6</sup> or the Sundry Gods of the Ten Quarters, <sup>7</sup>they regard me as an intimate friend.* You may go anywhere you like to lodge your complaint!”

When Tripitaka heard him using such strong language, he was quite shocked. “Oh, disciple,” he said, “my prayer was meant to make you appreciate the reverence for life and become a virtuous person. Why are you taking it so hard?”

“Master,” replied Pilgrim, “what you’ve said is no joke! Anyway, let’s go find shelter for the night.” Still nursing his anger, the elder forced himself to mount the horse. Thus the Great Sage Sun harboured feelings of hostility while 8 Rules and Sand-monk, too, were swayed by enmity. In fact, master and disciples, as they followed the main road westward, only appeared to be cordial. Presently a village north of the road came into sight, and, pointing with his whip, Tripitaka said, “Let’s go over there to ask for shelter.”

“Very good,” replied 8 Rules.

They went up to the village where the Tang Monk dismounted. As they looked about, they found that it was a rather nice place after all. *See on the path wild blooms parade; motley trees the door blockade. Mountain streams from distant banks flow; on level fields’ mallow and wheat grow. Sedge and reed dew-moistened, a small gull rests. Willows in gentle breeze, a tired bird nests. Fresh cedars, pine-studded, rival in green. Red smartweeds’ bright hues with rushes are seen. Village dogs bark; vesper cocks crow; cattle well-fed, cowboys now homeward go. Yellow millet’s cooked for smoke’s in sight from mountain homes at time of fading light.* As the elder walked forward, he saw an old man emerging from one of the village huts. The elder immediately greeted him, and the old man asked, “Where does the priest come from?”

“This humble cleric,” replied Tripitaka, “is someone sent by imperial commission to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. It is getting late as I pass through your honoured region, and that is why I’ve come to ask for a night’s lodging.” With a chuckle, the old man said, “It is an enormous journey from your place to mine. How is it that you’ve scaled the mountains and forded the waters all by yourself?”

“This humble cleric,” said Tripitaka, “also has three disciples in my company.”

“Where are your honoured disciples?” asked the old man, and Tripitaka pointed with his hand to reply, “Those three standing near the main road.” Lifting his head, the old man discovered how hideous they looked and he immediately turned to try to flee inside. He was caught by Tripitaka however who said, “Old patron, I beg you to be merciful. Please grant us shelter for one night.” Trembling all over, the old man could hardly speak. He waved his head and his hand, saying, “No! No! No! These can’t be human beings! They must be monster-spirits!”

Attempting to placate him with a smile, Tripitaka said, “Please don’t be afraid, patron. My disciples are born like that. They are not monster-spirits.”

“Oh, my dad!” cried the old man. “One is a Nature spirit, one is a horse-face, and one is a thunder squire.” On hearing this, Pilgrim shouted back, “The thunder squire is my grandson, the Nature spirit is my great-grandson, and the horse-face is my great-great grandson.” When the old man heard this, his spirit left him and his soul fled; his face drained of all colour, he only wanted to go inside. Tripitaka took hold of him and entered the thatched hall. Smiling again, he said, “Old Patron, don’t be afraid of them. All of them are quite rude, and they don’t know how to speak properly.”

As he was thus trying to pacify the old man, an old woman leading a child about five or six years old walked out from the rear. “Papa,” she said, “why are you fretting like that?” Only then did the old man say, “Mama, bring us some tea.” The old woman indeed left the child behind to go inside and brought out two cups of tea. After he drank it, Tripitaka turned to salute the old woman, saying, “This humble cleric is someone sent by the Great Tang of the Land of the East to go acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. I just arrived in your region and wanted to beg from you a night’s lodging. Because my three disciples are rather ugly in their appearances, the elder of your family has been struck with false alarm.”

“If you’re so intimidated by ugly appearances,” said the old woman, “what would happen if you faced tigers or wolves?”

“Oh, Mum,” replied the old man, “it’s all right if they look ugly but they are scarier once they open their mouths. I made the remark that they looked like a Nature spirit, a horse-face, and a thunder squire, and one of them shouted back saying that the thunder squire’s his grandson, the Nature spirit his great-grandson, and the horse-face his great-great grandson. I was quite terrified by what I heard.”

“No! No!” said the Tang Monk. “The one who looks like a thunder squire happens to be my eldest disciple, Sun Wukong; the one with the horse-face’s my second disciple, Bullseye Aware of Ability, and the one who looks like a Nature spirit’s my third disciple, Sand Awakened to Purity. Though they may be ugly, they’ve embraced the faith of utter poverty and made submission to the virtuous fruit. They’re no vicious demons or ferocious fiends. Why fear them?”

Greatly relieved by what they heard, the old couple said, “Please come in, please come in.”

The elder walked out of the door to instruct his disciples, saying, “Just now the old man found you three most repulsive. When you go in now to meet him and his family, don’t offend them. All of you’d behave more courteously.”

“I’m both handsome and civilised,” said 8 Rules, “and I’m not sassy like elder brother.”

“Indeed!” chuckled Pilgrim. “You’re a fine man, if it weren’t for that long horn, those big ears, and that hideous face!”

"Stop wrangling," said Sand-monk. "This isn't the place for you to be smart-alecks. Let's go in! Let's go in!" Thereupon they brought the luggage and the horse inside, and after they reached the thatched hall, they made a salute before taking their seats. As she was both good and kind, the old woman took the little boy inside and then asked for rice to be cooked and a vegetarian meal to be prepared for master and disciples. After they ate, it grew dark and lamps were brought into the thatched hall so that the pilgrims could sit and chat. "Patron," asked the elder, "what is your noble surname?" The elder replied, "My surname is Yang."

When asked about his age, the old man replied that he was seventy-four. "How many sons do you've?" asked Tripitaka again. The old man said, "Only one. Just now, the one following Mama is our little grandson."

"I'd like to greet your son," said the elder, "if he's willing to meet us."

"That fellow's," replied the elder, "unworthy of your salute. Life's rather cruel to this old moron because I can't seem to be able to rear him. He's no longer staying with us."

"Where is he then," said Tripitaka, "and what sort of profession does he have?"

"Pity! Pity!" sighed the old man, shaking his head. "If he had a profession somewhere, that would be lucky for me. Unfortunately he is wicked in thought and has no regard for his origin. All he cares for is to plunder and rob, to kill and burn. His friends are all rascals and ruffians. He went out about five days ago, and he hasn't been back since."

When Tripitaka heard this, he dared not reply, thinking to himself, "Perhaps he's one of those beaten to death by Wukong..." As he grew more anxious, the elder rose from his seat and exclaimed, "My goodness! My goodness! How could such fine parents give birth to such a rebellious son!" Approaching them, Pilgrim said, "Venerable Sir, such a vile and pernicious offspring can only implicate his parents in dire troubles. Why keep him? Let me go find him and slay him for you!"

"I'd like to send him away, too," said the old man, "but I've no other heir. Though he lacks talents, I must still leave him behind to dig my grave."

Smiling, both 8 Rules and Sand-monk said, "Elder Brother, you'd mind your own business. You and I aren't officials. If his family's unwilling, this affair should no longer concern us. Let us ask the patron for a bundle of hay instead so that we may make our bedding somewhere. By morning, we'd be on our way."

The old man got up and took Sand-monk to the rear to pick up two bundles of hay. Then they were told to rest in a barn in the rear garden. After Pilgrim led the horse and 8 Rules poled the luggage to the barn, they retired. The son of the old man Yang was indeed one of those bandits. After Pilgrim had beaten to death the two chiefs on the mountain slope, the thieves scattered and fled for their lives. By about the time of the fourth watch however, they had regrouped and came to knock on the door of the Yang house. When he heard the noise, the old man put on his clothes at once and said, "Mama, he's back."

"If he's here," said the old woman, "go open the door and let him in."

No sooner had he opened the door when those thieves swarmed inside, all crying, "We're hungry! We're hungry!"

The son of old Yang hurried inside to wake up his wife, so that she could cook some rice. As there was no more firewood in the kitchen, he had to bring back some from the rear garden. Then he asked his wife in the kitchen, "Whose white horse's that in the rear garden?"

"It belongs to some monks from the Land of the East," said the wife, "who are on their way to seek scriptures. They came to ask for lodging last night, and Papa and Mama fed them dinner before they were sent to sleep in the barn back there."

When the fellow heard this, he ran out to the thatched hall in front, laughing and clapping his hands. "Brothers," he said, "we're very lucky! Our foes are in the house!"

"Which foes?" asked the thieves.

The fellow replied, "The monks who killed our chiefs came to our house to ask for shelter. They are sleeping in the haystacks in our barn."

"How marvellous!" said the bandits, "Let's catch these bald asses and we'll chop each of them into minced meat, get the luggage and the horse for one thing, and avenge our leaders for another."

"Don't be hasty," said the fellow. "All of you'd sharpen your knives right now. Wait until the rice is cooked; after we've a full meal, we can attack them together."

The thieves indeed went to sharpen their knives and spears. When the old man heard them talking like that however, he went quietly to the rear garden and woke up the Tang Monk and his three disciples. "That fellow has led a band of his friends here," he said, "and when they discovered that you're here, they planned to harm you. Mindful of the fact that you've travelled a great distance to reach our place, this old moron can't bear the thought of your getting hurt. Pack your bags quickly, and I'll let you out the back door." When Tripitaka heard this, he shook all over as he respected to thank the old man. Then he called 8 Rules to lead the horse, Sand-monk to pole the luggage, and Pilgrim to pick up the 9-ringed priestly staff. After the old man let them out of the back door, he returned to the front and quietly went to bed once more. Now about the fellow and his companions. When they had sharpened their knives and spears and eaten their fill, it was already about the time of the fifth watch. They rushed together into the rear garden but no one was to be seen. Quickly lighting torches and lamps, they searched all around for a long time but not a trace could be detected. Then they found that the back door was open and they all said, "They've escaped from the back door!"

With a shout, they gave chase immediately. Every bandit was darting forward like an arrow, and by sunrise, they caught sight of the Tang Monk. When the elder heard shouts behind him, he turned to look and discovered a band of some thirty men rushing toward him, all armed with knives and spears. "Oh, disciples," he cried, "the brigand troops are catching up with us. What shall we do?"

"Relax, relax!" said Pilgrim. "Old monkey will go finish them off!"

"Wukong," said Tripitaka as he stopped his horse, "you must not hurt these people. Just frighten them away."

Unwilling, of course, to listen to his master, Pilgrim turned quickly to face his pursuers, saying, "Where are you going, sirs?"

"You nasty baldy!" cried the thieves. "Give us back the lives of our great kings!"

As they encircled Pilgrim, the bandits lifted their spears and knives to stab and hack away madly. The Great Sage gave one wave of his rod and it had the thickness of a bowl; with it, he fought until those bandits dropped like stars and dispersed like clouds. Those he bumped into died at once, those he caught hold of perished immediately, those he tapped had their bones broken, and those he brushed against had their skins torn. The few smart ones managed to escape but the rest of the dumb ones all went to see King Yama!

When Tripitaka saw that many men had fallen, he was so aghast that he turned and galloped toward the West with Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk hard on the horse's heels. Pilgrim pulled over one of the wounded bandits and asked, "Which is the son of old Yang?"

"Dad," groaned the thief, "the one in yellow." Pilgrim went forward to pick up a knife and beheaded the one in yellow. Holding the bloody head in his hand, he retrieved his iron rod and, in great strides, caught up with the Tang Monk. As he arrived before the horse, he raised the head and said, "Master, this is the rebellious son of old Yang, and he's been beheaded by old monkey." Paling with fright, Tripitaka fell down from the horse, crying, "Wretched ape! You've scared me to death! Take it away! Take it away!" 8 Rules went forward and kicked the head to the side of the road where he used the muckrake to bury it.

Sand-monk, meanwhile, put down the luggage and took hold of the Tang Monk, saying, "Master, please get up." After he regained composure, the Tang Monk stood on the ground and began to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell. The head of Pilgrim was clamped so painfully tight that his entire face turned scarlet, his eyes bulged, and dizziness overtook him. Rolling on the ground, all he could mutter was; "Stop that recital! Stop that recital!" The elder however, went on for more than ten times, and still he would not stop. Pilgrim was doing somersaults and handstands, for the pain was truly unbearable.

"Master, please forgive my sins!" he cried. "If you've something to say, say it. Just stop that recital!" Only then did Tripitaka halt his recitation and say, "I've nothing to say to you. I don't want you as my follower. Go back." Respecting despite his pain, Pilgrim said, "Master, how is it that you're chasing me away?"

"Brazen ape," said Tripitaka, "you're just too vicious! You're no scripture pilgrim. When you slaughtered those two bandit chiefs below the mountain slope yesterday, I took offence already at your lack of human kindness. When we reached that old man's house last night, he was good enough to give us lodging and food, and moreover, it was *he* who opened his back door to let us escape with our lives. Though his son is no good, he has not done anything to us to deserve this kind of execution. As if that's not enough, you've taken so many lives that you've practically destroyed the sentiment of peace in this world. I've tried to admonish you so many times but there's not a single thought of kindness in you. Why should I keep you? Be gone, quickly! Or I'll start reciting the magic words once more!"

"Stop it! Stop it!" cried a horrified Pilgrim. "I'm going!" He said he would go and immediately he vanished without a trace by his cloud somersault. Alas, thus it is that *elixir will not ripen with a violent mind; when spirit's unstable, the Way's hard to find.*

True Pilgrim lays bare his woes at Mount Potalaka; False Monkey King transcribes texts at Water-Curtain Cave

A dejected Great Sage Sun rose into mid-air. He was about to return to the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain but he was afraid that those little fiends might laugh at him, for how could he be a true hero if he could betray his own word? He thought of seeking shelter in the celestial palace but he feared that he would not be given permission to stay there long. He next thought of the islands in the sea but then he was ashamed to face the resident mortals. Finally, he considered the dragon palace but he could not stomach the idea of approaching the dragon kings as a suppliant. Truly, he had absolutely no place to go, and he thought sadly to himself, "All right! All right! All right! I'll go to see my master again, for only that will bear the right fruit."

He dropped down from the clouds and went before the horse of Tripitaka, saying, "Master, please forgive this disciple one more time! I'll never dare work violence again. I promise I'll accept all your admonitions, and I beg you to let me accompany you to the Western Heaven." When the Tang Monk saw him however, he even refused to reply. As soon as he reined in the horse, he recited the Tight-Fillet Spell. Over and over again, he went through it for more than twenty times until the Great Sage fell salute to the ground, the fillet cutting an inch into his flesh. Only then did the elder stop and say, "Why don't you leave? Why have you come to bother me again?"

Pilgrim could only reply, "Don't recite anymore! Don't recite anymore! I can spend my days somewhere but without me I fear that you can't reach the Western Heaven." Growing angry, Tripitaka said, "You're a murderous ape! Heaven knows how many times you've brought troubles on me! I absolutely don't want you anymore. Whether I can reach there or not, it's no concern of yours. Leave quickly! If you don't, I'll start the magic word again, and this time, I'll not stop – not until your brains are squeezed out!" When the Great Sage saw that his master refused to change his mind, and as the pain was truly unbearable, he had no alternative but to mount his cloud somersault once more and rise into the air. Then he was struck by the thought: "If this monk is so ungrateful to me, I'll go to the Nun Guanyin at Mount Potalaka and tell on him."

Dear Great Sage! He turned his somersault around and in less than an hour reached the Great Southern Ocean. Lowering his auspicious luminosity, he descended on the Potalaka Mountain and sped at once into the purple bamboo grove. There he was met by the disciple Liberation who greeted him, saying, "Where is the Great Sage going?"

"I must see the Nun," replied Pilgrim. Liberation led him to the entrance of the Tidal Sound Cave where the Boy Skilled in Wealth also greeted him, saying, "Why has the Great Sage come here?"

"I've something to tell on the Nun," Pilgrim said.

When he heard the words "to tell on,"<sup>1</sup> Skilled in Wealth laughed and said, "What a smart-mouthed ape! You think you can oppress people just like the time I caught the Tang Monk. The nun is a holy and righteous goddess, one who is of great compassion, great promise, and great conveyance, one who with boundless power saves us from our sufferings. What has she done that you want to bring an accusation against her?" Pilgrim was already deeply depressed; what he heard only aroused him to anger and he gave such a snarl that the Boy Skilled in Wealth backed off at once. "You wicked, ungrateful little beast!" he shouted. "You're so dim-witted! You're once a fiend, a spirit but it was I who asked the Nun to take you in. Since you've made your submission to the Right, you've been enjoying true liberty and long life – an age as everlasting in fact as Heaven's. Instead of thanking me, how dare you be so insulting? I said that I was going to tell something on the Nun. How dare you say that I'm smart-mouthed?" Trying to placate him with a smile, Skilled in Wealth said, "You're still an impulsive ape! I was just teasing you. Why do you change colour so suddenly?"

As they were thus conversing, a white cockatoo came into view, flying back and forth before them for a couple of times, and they knew that this was the summons of the Nun. Whereupon Liberation and Skilled in Wealth led the way to the treasure lotus platform. As Pilgrim raised his hand to salute to the Nun, he could no longer restrain the tears from gushing forth and he wailed loudly. Asking Liberation to lift him up, the Nun said, "Wukong, tell me plainly what's causing you such great sorrow. Stop crying! I'll relieve your suffering and dispel your woe."

Pilgrim, still weeping, saluted again before he said, "In previous years, when's your disciple ever consented to be snubbed by anyone? When however, I was liberated by the Nun from my Heaven-sent calamity and took the vow of complete poverty to accompany the Tang Monk on his way to see God for scriptures in the Western Heaven, I was willing to risk my very life. To rescue him from his demonic obstacles was like *snatching a tender bone from the tiger's mouth, scraping off one scale, live, from a dragon's back*. My only hope's to be able to return to the Real and attain the right fruit, cleanse myself of sins, and destroy the deviates. How'd I know that this elder could be so ungrateful! He can recognise no virtuous cause, nor can he distinguish between black and white."

"Tell me," said the Nun, "a little about the black and white." Whereupon Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how he had beaten to death the brigands that provoked the misgivings of the Tang Monk; how without distinguishing black and white, the Tang Monk had used the Tight-Fillet Spell to banish him several times; and how he had to come to lay bare his woes to the Nun because there was no place on Earth or in Heaven where he could find refuge. Then the Nun said to him: "When Tripitaka Tang received the imperial decree to journey to the West, his sole intention was to be a virtuous monk, and therefore he most certainly would not lightly take even one human life. With your limitless magic power, why should you beat to death these many bandits? Those brutish bandits are no good, to be sure but they are, after all, human beings and they don't deserve such punishment. They are not like those fiendish fowl or monstrous beasts, those demons or griffins. If you kill or slaughter

those things, it's your merit but when you take human lives, then it's your wickedness. Just frighten them away, and you'd still be able to protect your master. In my opinion, therefore, you've not acted in a virtuous manner."

Still tearful, Pilgrim respected and said, "Though I may not have acted in a virtuous manner, I'd have been given a chance to use my merit to atone for my sins. I don't deserve to be banished like this. I beg now the Nun to have compassion on me and recite the Loose-Fillet Spell. Let me be released from the golden fillet and I'll give it back to you. Let me go back to the Water-Curtain Cave with my life." Smiling at him, the Nun replied, "The Tight-Fillet Spell was imparted to me originally by Siddhartha who sent me in that year to go find a scripture pilgrim in the Land of the East. He gave me three kinds of treasure: the brocade cassock, the nine-ringed priestly staff, and three fillets named the golden, the tight, and the prohibitive. I was also taught in secret three different spells but there was no such thing as the Loose-Fillet Spell."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "let me take leave of the Nun."

The Nun asked, "Where are you going?"

"To the Western Heaven," replied Pilgrim, "where I'll beg Siddhartha to recite the Loose-Fillet Spell."

"Wait a moment," said the Nun, "and let me scan the fortune for you."

"No need for that," said Pilgrim. "This sort of misfortune is all I can take!"

"I'm not scanning yours," said the Nun, "but the Tang Monk's." *Dear Nun!*

As she sat solemnly on the lotus platform, her mind penetrated the three realms and her eyes of wisdom surveyed from a distance the entire universe. In a moment, she opened her mouth and said, "Wukong, your master will soon encounter a fatal ordeal. Before long, he will be looking for you, and I'll tell him then to take you back so that both of you can acquire the scriptures to attain the right fruit." The Great Sage Sun had no choice but to obey; not daring to misbehave, he stood at attention beneath the lotus platform. The elder Tang after he had banished Pilgrim, told 8 Rules to lead the horse and Sand-monk to pole the luggage. All four of them headed toward the West. When they had travelled some fifty miles, Tripitaka stopped the horse and said, "Disciples, we left the village at the early hour of the fifth watch, and then that Ban-Horse-Plague made me terribly upset. After this half a day, I'm quite hungry and thirsty. Which of you'll go beg me some food?"

"Please dismount, Master," said 8 Rules, "and let me see if there's a village nearby for me to do so." On hearing this, Tripitaka climbed down from the horse while Idiot rose on the clouds. As he stared all around, he found mountains everywhere but there was not a single house in sight. Dropping down, 8 Rules said to Tripitaka, "There's no place to beg food. I'd see a village nowhere."

"If there's no place to beg food," said Tripitaka, "let's get some water for my thirst." 8 Rules said, "I'll go fetch some water from the brooklet south of the mountain." Sand-monk therefore handed the alms-bowl over to him, and supporting it with his palm, 8 Rules left on the clouds and fog. The elder sat by the road to wait for him but after a long while, he still did not return. The bitter thirst, alas, was becoming quite unbearable for which a testimonial poem says:

*To nurse breath and spirit, that's extraction: feelings and nature are in form the same.  
Ailments arise from spirit and mind distraught; when shape and sperm fail, the Way declines.  
3 flowers fizzle and your labour's vain; 2all 4 Greats3 wither and you strive for naught.  
Earth and wood sterile, metal and water die. When'll true self, so sluggish, be attained?*

When Sand-monk saw how greatly Tripitaka was suffering from his hunger and thirst, and 8 Rules still had not returned with the water, he had no alternative but to put down the wraps and tie up the white horse. Then he said, "Master, please sit here for a moment; let me go and see if I can hurry him back with the water." Tears welling up in his eyes, the elder could only nod his head to give his reply. Quickly mounting the cloudy luminosity, Sand-monk also headed for the south of the mountain.

As he sat there all by himself enduring his agonies, the elder suddenly heard a loud noise near him. He was so startled that he jumped up, and then he saw that Pilgrim Sun was kneeling on one side of the road, his two hands holding high a porcelain cup. "Master," he said, "without old monkey, you don't even have water. This is a cup of nice, cool water. Drink it to relieve your thirst, and let me then go beg some food for you."

"I'll not drink your water!" replied the elder. "If I die of thirst on the spot, I'll consider this my martyrdom! I don't want you anymore! Leave me!"

"Without me," said Pilgrim, "you can't go to the Western Heaven."

"Whether I can or not," said Tripitaka, "is no business of yours! Lawless ape! Why are you bothering me again?" Changing his colour all at once, that Pilgrim became incensed and shouted at the elder, "You cruel bonze! How you humiliate me!" He threw away the porcelain cup and slammed the iron rod on the back of the elder who fainted immediately on the ground. Picking up the two blue woollen wraps, the monkey mounted his cloud somersault and went off to some place.

We now tell you about 8 Rules who went to the south slope of the mountain with his alms-bowl. As he passed the fold of the mountain, a thatched hut, the sight of which had been blocked previously by the mountain, came into view. He walked up to it and discovered that this was some sort of human residence. Idiot thought to himself, "I've such an ugly face. They will no doubt be afraid of me and refuse to give me any food. I must use transformation..."

Dear Idiot! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and shook his body seven or eight times. At last he changed into a yellowish, consumptive monk, still rather stout-ish. Moaning and groaning, he staggered up to the door and called out: "Patron, *if your kitchen has surplus rice, let it starved wayfarers suffice*. This humble cleric is from the Land of the East, on his way to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. My master, now sitting by the road, is hungry and thirsty. If you've any cold rice or burnt crusts, I beg you to give us some."

Now, the men of the household had all gone to plant the fields, and only two women remained behind. They had just finished cooking lunch and filled two large bowls with rice to be sent to the fields while some rice and crusts were still in the pot. When they saw his sickly appearance, and when they heard all that muttering about going to the Western Heaven from the Land of the East, they thought that he was babbling because of his illness. Afraid, moreover, that he might fall dead right before their door, the women hurriedly packed the alms-bowl with the leftovers, crust and all that Idiot gladly received. After he left on the road from which he came, he changed back into his original form. As he proceeded, he heard someone calling, "Eight Rules!" Raising his head, he found that it was Sand-monk, standing on a cliff and shouting, "Come this way! Come this way!" Then he leaped down from the cliff and approached 8 Rules, saying, "There's lovely, clean water here in the brook. Why didn't you bail some? Where did you run off to?"

"When I reached here," said 8 Rules, chuckling, "I saw a house in the fold of the mountain. I went there and succeeded in begging from them this bowl of dried rice."

"We can use that," said Sand-monk, "but Master's terribly thirsty. How can we bring back some water?"

"That's easy," replied 8 Rules. "Fold up the hem of your robe, and we'll use that to hold the rice. I'll take the alms-bowl to bail some water."

In great spirits, the two of them went back to the spot by the road where they saw Tripitaka lying down with his face hugging the earth. The reins were loosened, and the white horse was rearing up and neighing repeatedly by the road. The pole with the luggage however, was nowhere to be seen. 8 Rules was so shaken that he stamped his feet and beat his chest, shouting, "This has to be it! This has to be it! The cohorts of those bandits whom Pilgrim Sun beat to death must have returned to kill Master and take the luggage."

"Let's tie up the horse first," said Sand-monk, and then he too began to shout: "What shall we do? What shall we do? This is truly the failure that comes in midway!" As he turned to call but once "Master," tears streamed down his face and he wept bitterly. "Brother," said 8 Rules, "stop crying. When we've reached this stage of affairs, let's not talk about that scripture business. You watch over Master's corpse and let me ride to some village store in whatever county or district nearby and see if I can buy a coffin. Let's bury Master and then we can disperse."

Unwilling however, to give up on his master, Sand-monk turned the Tang Monk over on his back and put his own face up to the corpse's face. "My poor master!" he wailed, and presently, the elder's mouth and nose began to belch hot air as a little warmth could also be felt on his chest. "Eight Rules," cried Sand-monk hurriedly, "come over here. Master's not dead!" Idiot approached them and lifted up the elder who woke up slowly, groaning all the time. "You lawless ape!" he exclaimed. "You've just about struck me dead!"

"Which ape is this?" asked both Sand-monk and 8 Rules, and the elder could do nothing more than to sigh. Only after he drank several gulps of water did he say, "Disciples, soon after both of you left, that Wukong came to bother me again. Because I adamantly refused to take him back, he gave me a blow with his rod and took away our blue woollen wraps."

When 8 Rules heard this, he clenched his teeth as fire leaped up from his heart. "This brazen ape!" he said. "How could he be so insolent? Sand-monk, you look after Master and let me go to his home to demand the wraps."

"Stop being so angry," said Sand-monk. "We'd take Master to that house in the fold of the mountain and beg for some hot liquids to warm up the rice we managed to get just now. Let's take care of Master first before you go look for him."

8 Rules agreed; after having helped their master to mount up, they held the alms-bowl and carried the cold rice up to the house's door where they found only an old woman inside. Seeing them, she quickly wanted to hide. Sand-monk pressed his palms together and said, "Old Mama, we're those from the Land of the East sent by the Tang court to go to the Western Heaven. Our master is somewhat indisposed, and that is why we've come here especially to your house to beg some hot tea or water, so that he may eat some rice."

"Just now," said the old woman, "there was a consumptive monk who claimed to have been sent from the Land of the East. We've already given him some food. How is it that you're also from the Land of the East? There's no one in the house. Please go to someplace else." On hearing this, the elder held onto 8 Rules and dismounted. Then he bent low and said, "Old *Popo*, I'd originally three disciples who were united in their efforts to accompany me to see God for scriptures at the Great Thunderclap Monastery in India. My eldest disciple whose name is Sun Wukong, has unfortunately practiced violence all his life and refused to follow the virtuous path. For this reason, I banished him. Little did I expect him to return in secret and give my back a blow with his rod. He even took our luggage and our clothing. I must now send a disciple to go find him and ask for our things but the open road is no place to sit. Hence we've come to ask your permission to use your house as a temporary resting place. As soon as we get back our luggage, we'll leave, for we dare not linger."

"But there was a yellowish, consumptive monk just now," said the old woman, "who received our food. He also claimed to be part of a pilgrimage going to the Western Heaven from the Land of the East. How could there be so many of you?" Unable to restrain his giggles, 8 Rules said, "That was I. Because I've this long horn and huge ears, I was afraid that your family might be frightened and refuse me food. That was why I changed into the form of that monk. If you don't believe me, just take a look at what my brother's carrying in the fold of his robe. Isn't that your rice, crust and all?"

When the old woman saw that it was indeed the rice that she had given him, she no longer refused them and asked them to go inside and take a seat. She then prepared a pot of hot tea that she gave to Sand-monk for him to mix with the rice. After the master had eaten several mouthfuls, he felt calmer and said, "Which of you'll go ask for the luggage?"

"In that year when Master sent him back there," said 8 Rules, "I went to look for him. So I know the way to his Flower-Fruit Mountain and the Water-Curtain Cave. Let me go! Let me go!"

"You can't go!" replied the elder. "That monkey has never been friendly with you, and you're so rough with your words. A tiny slip when you talk to him and he may want to attack you. Let Awakened to Purity go."

"I'll go! I'll go!" said Sand-monk agreeably whereupon the elder gave him this further instruction: "You must size up the situation as soon as you get there. If he's willing to give you our wraps, just pretend to thank him and take them. If he's unwilling, be sure not to argue or fight with him. Go directly to the Nun's place at the South Sea and tell her everything. Ask the Nun to demand the luggage from him." After he had listened most attentively, Sand-monk said to 8 Rules, "When I'm gone, you must not be slack in your care of Master. And don't cause any mischief in this family, for I fear that they would not serve you rice then. I'll be back soon."

"I know," said 8 Rules, nodding. "But you must come back quickly whether you succeed or not in getting our things back. I don't want something to happen like *hauling firewood with a pointed pole: you lose at both ends!*"

And so Sand-monk made the magic sign and mounted the cloudy luminosity to head for the East East-Videha Continent. Truly *body's here but spirit has flown its lodge. How'd fireless oven heat elixir? Yellow Dame leaves her lord to seek Metal Squire; Wood-Mum bids a teacher in sickly looks. This journey's of unknown returning date, time of coming home hard to surmise. 5 Phases work no smooth conquest or growth. Wait till Mind Monkey re-enters the pass.* 4Only after he had travelled in the air for three nights and days did Sand-monk finally reach the Great Eastern Ocean. As the sound of waves reached his ears, he lowered his head and saw that *black fog swelling skyward makes the dark air dense; the brine holds the sun to chill the light of dawn*. He was of course too preoccupied to enjoy the scenery. Passing the mortal island of Yingzhou, he hurried toward the Flower-Fruit Mountain, riding on the oceanic wind and tide. After a long while, he saw towering peaks jutting up like rows of halberds and sheer cliffs like hanging screens. He dropped down on the highest summit and began to search for his way to the Water-Curtain Cave. As he drew near his destination, he began to hear a noisy din made by countless monkey spirits living in the mountain. Sand-monk walked closer and found Pilgrim Sun sitting high on a rock terrace, his 2 hands holding up a piece of paper from which he was reading aloud the following statement:

*Emperor Li, King of the Great Tang in the Land of the East now commands the sage monk Chen Xuanzang, royal brother before the throne and master of the Law to go to India in the West and ask for scriptures in all sincerity from the Religious Patriarch, Siddhartha in the Great Thunderclap Monastery on the Spirit Mountain.* Because of grave illness invading our body, our soul departed for the region of Hades. It's our good fortune to have our life span unexpectedly lengthened and the Kings of Darkness kindly returned us to life. Whereupon we convened a vast and goodly assembly to erect a Plot of the Way for the redemption of the dead. We're indebted to the salvific and woe-dispelling Nun Guanshiyin who appeared to us in her golden form and revealed that there're both god and scriptures in the West that'd deliver and redeem the lost souls of the dead. We've therefore commissioned Xuanzang, master of the Law to traverse 1000 mountains in order to acquire such scriptures.



When he reaches the various states of the Western region, we hope that they'll not destroy such goodly affinity and allow him to pass through on the basis of this rescript. *This is an imperial document promulgated on an auspicious day in the autumn of the 13<sup>th</sup> year in the Zhenguan reign period of the Great Tang. Since leaving my<sup>6</sup> noble nation, I've passed through several countries and in mid-journey I've made 3 disciples: the eldest being Pilgrim Sun Wukong, the 2<sup>nd</sup> being Bullseye Aware of Ability 8 Rules, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> being Sand Awakened to Purity Monk.*

After he read it aloud once, he started again from the beginning. When Sand-monk realised that it was the travel rescript, he could no longer contain himself. Drawing near, he shouted: "Elder Brother, this is Master's rescript. Why're you reading it like that?"

When that Pilgrim heard this, he raised his head but could not recognise Sand-monk. "Seize him! Seize him!" he yelled. The other monkeys immediately had Sand-monk surrounded; pulling and tugging at him, they hauled him before that Pilgrim who bellowed, "Who're you that you dare approach our mortal cave without permission?"

When Sand-monk saw how he had changed colour and refused to recognise his own, he had little choice but to salute and say, "Let me inform you, Elder Brother. Our master's previously rather impetuous and wrongly put the blame on you. He even cast the spell on you several times and banished you home. Your brothers didn't really try to pacify Master for one thing and we'd to look for water and beg for food soon for another because of Master's hunger and thirst. We didn't expect you to come back with all your good intentions. When you took offence at Master's adamant refusal to take you in again, you struck him down, left him fainted on the ground, and took the luggage. After we rescued him, I was sent to plead with you. If you no longer hate Master and can recall his previous kindness in giving you freedom, please give us back the luggage and return with me to see master. We can go to the Western Heaven together and accomplish the right fruit. But if your animosity's deep and you're unwilling to leave with me, please give me back the wraps at least. You can enjoy your old age in this mountain and will have done at the same time all of us a very good turn."

When he heard these words, that Pilgrim laughed scornfully and said, "Worthy Brother, what you said makes little sense to me. I struck the Tang Monk and took the luggage not because I didn't want to go to the West, nor because I loved to live in this place. I'm studying the rescript at the moment precisely because I want to go to the West all by myself to ask God for the scriptures. When I deliver them to the Land of the East, it'll be my success and no one else's. Those people of the South Jambūdvīpa Continent will honour me then as their patriarch and my fame will last for all posterity."

"You've spoken amiss, Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, smiling, "Why, we've never heard anyone speaking of 'Pilgrim Sun seeking scriptures!' When our God Siddhartha created the three canons of true scriptures, he also told the Nun Guanyin to find a scripture pilgrim in the Land of the East. Then she wanted us to traverse a thousand hills and search through many states as protectors of that pilgrim. The Nun once told us that the scripture pilgrim was originally Siddhartha's disciple whose religious designation was the Elder Gold Cicada. Because he failed to listen attentively to a lecture of the Religious Patriarch, he was banished from the Spirit Mountain to be reborn in the Land of the East. He was then instructed to bear the right fruit in the West by cultivating once more the great Way. Since it was preordained that he should encounter many demonic obstacles in his journey, we three were liberated so that we might become his guardians. If Elder Brother does not wish to accompany the Tang Monk in his quest that Religious Patriarch would be willing to impart to you the scriptures? Haven't you dreamed up all this in vain?"

"Worthy Brother," said that Pilgrim, "you've always been rather blockish! You know one thing but you fail to perceive another. You claim that you've a Tang Monk who needs both of us to protect him. Do you really think that I don't have a Tang Monk? I've already selected here a truly enlightened monk who will go acquire the scriptures and old monkey will only help him. Is there anything wrong with that? We've in fact decided that we'll begin the journey tomorrow. If you don't believe me, let me show you." He then cried: "Little ones, ask the old master to come out quickly please." The little fiends indeed ran inside and led out a white horse, followed by a Tripitaka Tang, an 8 Rules poling the luggage, and a Sand-monk carrying the priestly staff.

Enraged by the sight, Sand-monk cried, "Old Sand here changes neither his name when he walks nor his surname when he sits. How could there be another Sand-monk? Don't be impudent! Have a taste of my staff!"

Dear Sand-monk! Lifting high his fiend-routing staff with both his hands, he killed the specious Sand-monk with one blow on the head. He was actually a monkey spirit. That Pilgrim, too, grew angry; wielding his golden-hooped rod, he led the other monkeys and had Sand-monk completely surrounded. Charging left and right, Sand-monk managed to fight his way out of the encirclement. As he fled for his life by mounting the cloud and fog, he said to himself: "This brazen ape is such a rogue! I'm going to see the Nun to tell on him!"

When that Pilgrim saw that the Sand-monk had been forced to flee, he did not give chase. He went back to his cave instead and told his little ones to have the dead monkey skinned. Then his meat was taken to be fried and served as food along with coconut and grape juices. After they had their meal, that Pilgrim selected another monkey monster who knew transformation to change into a Sand-monk. He again gave them instructions on how to go to the West, and we'll leave them for the moment. Once Sand-monk had left the Eastern Ocean by mounting the clouds, he reached the South Sea after journeying for a day and night. As he sped forward, he saw the Potalaka Mountain approaching, and he stopped his cloud to look around. Marvellous place it was! Truly *this secret spot of Heaven, hidden depth of Earth where 100 springs join to bathe both sun and stars, the wind blows as the moon beams her rippling light. When the tide rises, the great fishes<sup>8</sup> change: when the waves churn, the huge scorpionfishes swim. Here water joins the northwest sea, its billows the Eastern Ocean fuse. The four seas are linked by the same Earth pulse; each isle mortal has its fairy homes. Speak not of Penglai everywhere. Let's look at Cave Potalaka. What fine scenery! The peak's bright colours show prime essence strong. Auspicious breeze wafts moonlight beneath the ridge. Through groves of purple bamboo peacocks fly; on willow-branch a sentient parrot speaks. Jade grass, jasper flowers bloom fair each year: gold lotus, jewelled trees grow annually. A few times the white cranes fly up the peak; the phoenix comes often to the mount-kiosk. Even fishes by nature seek authentic Truth, for to hear scriptures they leap through the waves.* Descending slowly from the Potalaka Mountain as he admired the scenery, he was met by the disciple, Liberation who said to him, "Sand Awakened to Purity, why aren't you accompanying the Tang Monk to procure scriptures? Why're you here?"

After Sand-monk returned his salute, he said, "I've a matter that requires my having an audience with the Nun. Please take the trouble to announce me." Liberation already knew that it had to do with his search for Pilgrim but he did not mention it. He went instead inside first and said to the Nun, "The youngest disciple of the Tang Monk, Sand Awakened to Purity, is outside seeking an audience." When Pilgrim Sun heard that beneath the platform, he chuckled and said, "This has to be that the Tang Monk has met some kind of ordeal, and Sand-monk is here to seek the assistance of the Nun." The Nun at once asked Liberation to call him in, and Sand-monk went to his knees to respect. After his salute, he raised his head and was about to tell the Nun what had happened, when all of a sudden he saw Pilgrim Sun standing on one side. Without even a word, Sand-monk whipped out his fiend-routing staff and aimed it at Pilgrim's face. Pilgrim however, did not fight back; he only stepped aside to dodge the blow. "You brazen ape!" screamed Sand-monk. "You rebellious simian guilty of ten evil deeds! So, you're even here to hoodwink the Nun!"

"Awakened to Purity!" shouted the Nun. "Don't raise your hands! If you've a complaint, tell it to me first."

Putting away his treasure staff, Sand-monk knelt down before the platform, and, still huffing, said to the Nun, "This monkey has performed countless violent acts along the way. The day before, he beat two highwaymen to death beneath the mountain slope, and Master already found fault with him. Little did we expect that that very night we'd to live right in the bandit camp, and he slaughtered a whole band of them. As if that weren't enough, he took a bloody head back to show to Master who was so aghast that he fell down from his horse. It was then that Master gave him a reprimand and banished him. After we separated, Master found the hunger and thirst unbearable at one place and told 8 Rules to go find water. When he didn't return after a long while, I was told to go find him. When Pilgrim Sun saw that we both had left, he sneaked back and gave Master a blow with his iron rod, after which he took away our two blue woollen wraps. When we finally returned, we managed to revive Master, and then I'd to make a special trip to his Water-Curtain Cave to demand from him the wraps. How could I know that he would change his face and refuse to recognise me? Instead, he was reciting back and forth the travel rescript of Master. When I asked him why, he said that he was no longer willing to accompany the Tang Monk. He wanted to go procure scriptures in the Western Heaven and take them all by himself to the Land of the East. That, he said, would be his sole merit, and the people would honour him as their patriarch while his fame would be everlasting. I told him, 'Without the Tang Monk who would be willing to give you scriptures?' He said then that he had already selected a true, enlightened monk, and he brought out a Tang Monk, all right, including a white horse, followed by an 8 Rules and a Sand-monk for me to see. 'I'm the Sand-monk,' I said, 'so how could there be another Sand-monk?' I rushed up to this impostor and gave him a blow with my treasure staff; it turned out to be a monkey spirit. Then this ape led his followers to try to capture me, and that was when I fled and decided to come here to inform the Nun. He must have used his cloud somersault and arrived first, and I don't know what sort of balderdash he has mouthed to dupe the Nun."

"Awakened to Purity," said the Nun, "don't blame another person wrongly. Wukong has been here for four days, and I've not let him go anywhere. How could he have gone to find another Tang Monk to go fetch scriptures by themselves?"

"But," said Sand-monk, "I saw a Pilgrim Sun in the Water-Curtain Cave. You think I'm lying?"

"In that case," said the Nun, "don't get upset. I'll tell Wukong to go with you to take a look at the Flower-Fruit Mountain. Truth is indestructible but falsehood can easily be eliminated. When you get there, you'll find out." On hearing this, Great Sage and Sand-monk took leave at once of the Nun and left. And so the result of their journey will be that *before Mount Flower-Fruit black and white will be made distinct; by the Water-Curtain Cave the true and perverse will be seen.*

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2 Minds cause disorder in the great cosmos; it's hard for one body to realise true Extinguishment<sup>1</sup>

After Pilgrim and Sand-monk respected to take leave of the Nun, they rose on 2 beams of auspicious light and departed from the South Sea. Now, the cloud somersault of Pilgrim was much faster than the mere cloud soaring of Sand-monk. He therefore wanted to speed ahead but Sand-monk pulled him back, saying, "Elder Brother, you needn't try to cover up or hide your tracks by getting there first. Let me travel right beside you."

The Great Sage of course was full of good intentions whereas Sand-monk at that moment was filled with suspicion. So the 2 of them rode the clouds together and in a little while, they spotted the Flower-Fruit Mountain. As they lowered their clouds to glance around, they found indeed outside the cave another Pilgrim sitting high on a stone ledge and drinking merrily with a flock of monkeys. His looks were exactly the same as those of the Great Sage: he, too had a gold fillet clamped to his brownish hair, a pair of fiery eyes with diamond pupils, a silk shirt on his body, a tiger kilt tied around his waist, a golden-hooped iron rod in one of his hands, and a pair of deerskin boots on his feet. He, too had a *hairy face, a thunder god beak, an empty jowl unlike Saturn's; 2 forked ears on a big, broad head, and huge fangs that have outward grown.* His ire aroused, Great Sage abandoned Sand-monk and rushed forward, wielding his iron rod and crying, "What sort of a fiend you're that you dare change into my appearance, take my descendants captive, occupy my mortal cave, and assume such airs?" When that Pilgrim saw him, he did not utter a word of reply; all he did was meet his opponent with the iron rod. The 2 Pilgrims closed in and 1 could not distinguish the true 1 from the false. *What a fight! 2 iron rods, 2 monkey sprites, this fight of theirs is truly no light thing! They both want to guard the royal brother of Tang, each seeking merit to acquire great fame. The true ape accepts the poverty faith; the specious fiend utters false Religious claims. Their magic gives them transformations vast: they're exact equals, that's the honest truth! 1 is the Equal to Heaven Sage of the unified breath of Composite Prime;<sup>21</sup> is a long-cultivated sentient spirit, able to shorten the ground. This 1 is the compliant golden-hooped rod; that 1 is the acquiescent staff of iron. They block and parry and fight to a draw; they buck and resist and neither can win. They join hands at 1<sup>st</sup> outside the cave; soon they rise to do battle in mid-air.* Treading on the cloudy luminosity, the 2 of them rose into the sky to fight. On the side, Sand-monk did not have the courage to join the battle for he found it truly difficult to distinguish between the 2 of them. He wanted very much to lend his assistance but he feared that he might inadvertently inflict harm on the real Pilgrim. After waiting patiently for a long while, he leaped down from the mountain cliff and wielded his fiend-routing staff to disperse the various fiends outside the Water-Curtain Cave. He then overturned the stone benches and smashed to pieces all those eating and drinking utensils before searching for his two blue woollen wraps. They were however, nowhere to be seen. The cave was located actually behind a huge waterfall that had the entrance neatly hidden as if it were behind a white curtain. That was the reason for the name, Water-Curtain Cave. Sand-monk, of course, had no idea of its history or its layout, and it was therefore difficult for him to make his search. Unable to recover his wraps, Sand-monk again mounted the clouds to rush up to mid-air. He held high his treasure staff but he simply dared not strike at either of the combatants. "Sand-monk," said the Great Sage, "if you can't help me, go back to Master and tell him about our situation. Let old monkey do battle with this fiend all the way to the Potalaka Mountain of South Sea so that the Nun can distinguish the true from the false." When he finished speaking, the other Pilgrim also said the same thing. Since both of them had exactly the same appearance and there was not even the slightest difference even in their voices, Sand-monk could not distinguish 1 from the other. He had no choice but to change the direction of his cloud and go back to report to the Tang Monk.

*Look at those 2 Pilgrims instead!*

They fought as they journeyed; soon they arrived at the Potalaka Mountain in the South Sea, trading blows and insults all the time. All the continuous uproar quickly alerted the various guardian deities who rushed inside the Tidal Sound Cave to say, "Nun, there're indeed two Sun Wukongs who've arrived fighting!"

The Nun immediately descended from her lotus platform to go out of the cave with her disciples Liberation, the Boy Skilled in Wealth, and the Dragon Girl. "Cursed beasts," she cried, "where do you two think you're going?"

Still entangled together, 1 of them said, "Nun, this fellow indeed resembles your disciple. We started our battle from the Water-Curtain Cave but haven't yet reached a decision even after such a long bout. The fleshy eyes of Sand Awakened to Purity were too dim and dull to tell us apart and thus he'd not help us even if he had the strength. Your disciple told him to go back to the road to the West and report to my master. I've fought with this fellow up to your treasure mountain because I want you to lend us your eyes of wisdom. Please help your disciple to distinguish the true from the false, the real from the perverse."

When he finished speaking, the other Pilgrim also repeated the same words. The various deities and the Nun stared at the 2 for a long time but none could tell them apart. "Stop fighting," said the Nun, "and stand apart. Let me look at both of you once more."

They indeed let go of each other and stood on opposite sides. "I'm the real one," said 1 side.

"He's a fake!" said the other.

Asking Liberation and Goodly Wealth to approach her, the Nun whispered to them this instruction: “Each of you take hold of one of them firmly, and let me start reciting in secret the Tight-Fillet Spell. The one whose head hurts is the real monkey; the one who has no pain is specious.” Indeed, the two disciples took hold of the two Pilgrims as the Nun recited in silence the magic words. At once the two of them gripped their heads and rolled on the ground, both screaming, “Don’t recite! Don’t recite!” The Nun stopped her recital, and the two of them again became entangled together, fighting and shouting as before. Unable to think of anything else, the Nun asked the various deities and Liberation to go forward to help but the gods were afraid that they might hurt the real person and they, therefore, dared not raise their hands. “Sun Wukong,” called the Nun, and the two of them answered in unison. “When you’re appointed Bimawen,” she said, “and when you brought chaos to Heaven, all those celestial warriors could certainly recognise you. You go up to the Region Above now and they should be able to distinguish between the two of you.” This Great Sage thanked her and the other Pilgrim also thanked her.

Tugging and pulling at each other, screaming and hollering at each other, the two of them went before the South Heaven Gate. The Deity-King Virūpākṣa was so startled that he led Ma, Zhao, Wen, and Guan, the four great celestial warriors, and the rest of the divine gate attendants to bar the way with their weapons. “Where are you two going?” they cried. “Is this a place for fighting?”

The Great Sage said, “I was accompanying the Tang Monk on his way to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. Because I slayed some thieves on the way, that Tripitaka banished me, and I went to tell my troubles to the Nun Guanyin at the Potalaka Mountain. I’ve no idea when this monster-spirit assumed my form, struck down my master, and robbed us of our wraps. Sand-monk went to look for our things at the Flower-Fruit Mountain and discovered that this monster-spirit had taken over my lair. Thereafter, he went to seek the assistance of the Nun, and when he saw me standing at attention beneath the platform, he falsely accused me of using my cloud somersault in order to cover up my faults. The Nun, fortunately, was righteous and perceptive; she didn’t listen to Sand-monk and told me to go with him instead to examine the evidence at the Flower-Fruit Mountain. I discovered there that this monster-spirit indeed resembled old monkey. We fought just now from the Water-Curtain Cave to the place of the Nun but even she found it difficult to tell us apart. That’s why we came here. Let all of you deities take the trouble of using your perception and make distinction between the two of us.” When he finished speaking, that Pilgrim also gave exactly the same account. Though the various gods stared at them for a long time, they could not tell the difference. “If all of you can’t recognise us,” the two of them shouted, “stand aside and let us go see the Jade Emperor!”

Unable to resist them, the various deities had to let them through the Heaven Gate, and they went straight up to the Treasure Hall of Divine Mists. Marshal Ma dashed inside with Zhang, Ge, Xu, and Qiu, the Four Celestial Masters, to memorialise, saying, “There’re two Sun Wukongs from the Region Below who have fought their way into the Heaven Gate. They claim they want to see the Emperor.” Hardly had they finished speaking when the two monkeys brawled their way in. The Jade Emperor was so taken aback that he stood up and came down the treasure hall to ask, “For what reason did the two of you enter the celestial palace without permission? Are you seeking death with your brawling before us?”

“Your Majesty! Your Majesty!” cried Great Sage. “Your subject has already made submission and embraced the vow of poverty. I’d never dare be so audacious as to mock your authority again. But because this monster-spirit has changed into the form of your subject...” whereupon he gave a thorough account of what had taken place, ending with the words, “I beg you to do this for your subject and distinguish between the two of us.”

That Pilgrim also gave exactly the same account. Issuing a decree at once to summon Deity-King Li, the Pagoda-Bearer, the Jade Emperor commanded: “Let us look at those two fellows through the imp-reflecting mirror, so that the false may perish and the true endure.” The Deity-King took out the mirror immediately and asked the Jade Emperor to watch with the various celestial deities. What appeared in the mirror were two reflections of Sun Wukong: there was not the slightest difference between their golden fillets, their clothing, and even their hair. Since the Jade Emperor found it impossible to distinguish them, he ordered them chased out of the hall.

Great Sage was laughing scornfully while that Pilgrim also guffawed jovially as they grabbed each other’s head and neck once more to fight their way out of the Heaven Gate. Dropping down to the road to the West, they shouted at each other, “I’ll go see Master with you! I’ll go see Master with you!”

We now tell you about that Sand-monk who since leaving them at the Flower-Fruit Mountain, travelled again for three nights and days before he arrived at the mountain hut. After he told the Tang Monk all that had taken place, the elder was filled with regret, saying, “I thought at that time that it was Sun Wukong who gave me a blow with his rod and who robbed us of our wraps. How could I know that it was a monster-spirit who had assumed the form of Pilgrim?”

“Not only did that fiend do that,” said Sand-monk, “but he had someone change into an elder, and another into 8 Rules poling our wraps. In addition to a white horse, there was still another fiend who changed into the likeness of me. I’d not restrain my anger and killed him with one blow of my staff. He was actually a monkey spirit. I left in a hurry to go to inform the Nun who then asked Elder Brother to go with me to see for ourselves back at the Water-Curtain Cave. When we arrived, we discovered that that fiend was indeed an exact copy of Elder Brother. I’d not tell them apart and it was difficult, therefore, for me to lend any assistance. That’s why I came back first to report to you.” On hearing this, Tripitaka paled with fright but 8 Rules laughed uproariously, saying, “Fine! Fine! Fine! The *Popo* of our patron’s house has spoken true! She said that there had to be several groups of pilgrims going to procure scriptures. Isn’t this another group?”

The members of that family, old and young, all came to ask Sand-monk, “Where have you been these last few days? Did you go off to seek travel money?”

“I went to the place of my Big Brother,” said Sand-monk with a laugh, “at the Flower-Fruit Mountain of the East East-Videha Continent to look for our luggage. Next I went to have an audience with the Nun Guanyin at the Potalaka Mountain of South Sea. Then I’d to go back to the Flower-Fruit Mountain again before I came back here.”

“What was the distance that you had to travel?” asked the old man. “Back and forth,” replied Sand-monk, “it had to be about two hundred thousand miles.”

“Oh, Sire,” said the old man, “you mean to tell me that you’ve covered all that distance in these few days? You must have soared on the clouds, or you’d never have made it.”

“If he didn’t soar on the clouds,” said 8 Rules, “how could he cross the sea?”

“We’ve not covered any distance,” said Sand-monk. “If it were my Big Brother, it would take only a couple of days for him to get there and return.” When those family members heard what he said, they all claimed that their visitors had to be mortals. “We’re mortals,” said 8 Rules, “but the mortals are really our juniors!”

As they were speaking, they suddenly heard a great uproar in the middle of the sky. They were so startled that they came out to look, and they found two Pilgrims locked in battle as they drew near. On seeing them, 8 Rules’ hands began to itch, and he said, “Let me see if I can tell them apart.”

Dear Idiot! He leaped into the air and cried, “Elder Brother, don’t fret! Old bull’s here!” The two Pilgrims cried out at the same time, “Brother, come and beat up this monster-spirit!” The old man was so astonished by the sight that he said to himself, “So we’ve in our house several *Arhats* who can ride the clouds and mount the fog! Even if I’d made a vow to feed the monks, I might not have been able to find this kind of noble people.” Without bothering to think of the cost, he wanted at once to bring out more tea and rice to present to his visitors. Then he muttered to himself, “But I fear that no good can come out of these two Pilgrims fighting like that. They will overturn Heaven and Earth and cause terrible calamity who knows where!”

When Tripitaka saw that the old man was openly pleased, though he was, at the same time, full of secret anxiety, he said to him, “Please do not worry, old Patron, and don’t start any lamentation. When this humble cleric succeeds in subduing his disciple and in inducing the wicked to return to virtue, he will most certainly thank you.”

“Please don’t mention it! Please don’t mention it!” said the old man repeatedly. “Please don’t say anything more, Patron,” said Sand-monk. “Master, you sit here while I go up there with Second Elder Brother. Each of us will pull before you one of them, and you can start reciting that little something. We’ll be able to tell, for whoever has pain will be the real Pilgrim.”

“You’re absolutely right,” said Tripitaka.

Sand-monk indeed rose to mid-air and said, “Stop fighting, the two of you, and we’ll go with you to Master and let him distinguish the true from the false.” Great Sage desisted, and that Pilgrim also dropped his hands. Sand-monk took hold of one of them and said, “Second Elder Brother, you take the other one.” They dropped down from the clouds and went before the thatched hut. As soon as he saw them, Tripitaka began reciting the Tight-Fillet Spell, and the two of them immediately screamed, “We’ve been fighting so bitterly already. How could you still cast that spell on us? Stop it! Stop it!” As his disposition had always been kind, the elder at once stopped his recitation but he could not tell them apart at all. Shrugging off the hold of Sand-monk and 8 Rules, the two of them were again locked in battle. “Brothers,” said Great Sage, “take care of Master, and let me go before King Yama with him to see if there could be any way of discriminating us.” That Pilgrim also spoke to them in the same manner. Tugging and pulling at each other, the two of them soon vanished from sight.

“Sand-monk,” said 8 Rules, “when you saw the false 8 Rules poling the luggage in the Water-Curtain Cave, why didn’t you take it away?” Sand-monk said, “When that monster-spirit saw me slaying his false Sand-monk with my treasure staff, he and his followers surrounded me and wanted to seize me. I’d to flee for my life, you know. After I told the Nun and went back to the entrance of the cave with Pilgrim, the two of them fought in mid-air while I went to overturn their stone benches and scattered the little fiends. All I saw then was a huge cascade flowing into a stream but I’d not find the cave entrance anywhere nor could I locate the luggage. That’s why I came back to Master empty-handed.”

“You really couldn’t have known this,” said 8 Rules. “When I went to ask him to return that year,<sup>3</sup> I met him first outside the cave. After I succeeded in persuading him to come, he said he wanted to go inside to change clothes. That was when I saw him diving right through the water, for the cascade is actually the cave entrance. That fiend, I suppose, must have hidden our wraps in there.”

“If you know where the entrance is,” said Tripitaka, “you’d go there now while he is absent and take out our wraps. Then we can go to the Western Heaven by ourselves. Even if he should want to join us again, I’ll not use him.”

“I’ll go,” answered 8 Rules. “Second Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “there are over a thousand little monkeys in that cave of his. You may be unable to handle them all by yourself.”

“No fear, no fear,” said 8 Rules, laughing.

He dashed out of the door, mounted the cloud and fog, and headed straight for the Flower-Fruit Mountain to search for the luggage. The 2 Pilgrims brawled all the way to the rear of the Mountain of Perpetual Shade. All those spirits on the mountain were so terrified that they, shaking and quaking, tried desperately to hide themselves. A few managed to escape first and they rushed inside the fortified pass of the nether region and reported in the Treasure Hall of Darkness: “Great Kings, there are two Great Sages, Equal to Heaven who are fighting their way down from the Mountain of Perpetual Shade.” King Qinguang of the First Chamber was so terrified that he at once passed the word to King of the Beginning River in the Second Chamber, King of the Poem Emperor in the Third Chamber, King of Complete Change in the Fourth Chamber, King Yama in the Fifth Chamber, King of Equal Ranks in the Sixth Chamber, King of Tai Mountain in the Seventh Chamber, King of City Markets in the Eighth Chamber, King of Avenging Ministers in the Ninth Chamber, and King of the Turning Wheel in the Tenth Chamber. Soon after the word had passed through each chamber, the ten kings assembled together and they also sent an urgent message to King Kṣiṭigarbha to meet them at the Hall of Darkness. At the same time, they called up all the soldiers of darkness to prepare to capture both the true and the false. In a moment, they felt a gush of strong wind and then they saw dense, dark fog rolling in, in the midst of which two were Pilgrims tumbling and fighting together. The Rulers of Darkness went forth to stop them, saying, “For what purpose are the Great Sages causing trouble in our nether region?”

“I’d to pass through the State of Western Liang,” replied Great Sage, “because I was accompanying the Tang Monk on his way to procure scriptures in the Western Heaven. We reached a mountain shortly thereafter where brigands attempted to rob my master. Old monkey slaughtered a few of them but my master took offence and banished me. I went instead to the Nun at South Sea to make known my difficulties. I’ve no idea how this monster-spirit got wind of it but somehow he changed into my likeness, struck down my master in mid-journey, and robbed him of his luggage. My younger brother, Sand-monk, went to my native mountain to demand the wraps but this fiend falsely claimed that he wished to go to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven in the name of Master. Fleeing to South Sea, Sand-monk informed the Nun when I was standing right there. The Nun then told me to go with him to look for myself at the Flower-Fruit Mountain, and I discovered that indeed my old lair was occupied by this fellow. I strove with him until we reached the place of the Nun but in truth his appearance, his speech, and the like are exactly like mine. Even the Nun found it hard to distinguish us. Then we fought our way up to Heaven, and the gods couldn’t tell us apart. We next went to see my master, and when he recited the Tight-Fillet Spell to test us, this fellow’s head hurt just like mine. That’s why we brawl down to the nether region, in hopes that you Rulers of Darkness will examine for me the Register of Life and Death and determine what the origin of the specious Pilgrim is. Snatch away his soul at once, so that there will not be the confusion of two Minds.” After he finished speaking, the fiend also repeated what he said in exactly the same manner.

On hearing this, the Rulers of Darkness summoned the judge in charge of the register to examine it from the beginning but there was, of course, nothing written down that had the name “specious Pilgrim.” He then studied the volume on hairy creatures but the one hundred and thirty some entries under the name *monkey* had already been crossed out by the Great Sage Sun with one stroke of the brush, in that year when he caused great havoc in the region of darkness after he had attained the Way.<sup>4</sup> Ever since that time, the name of any species of monkey was not recorded in the register. After he finished examining the volume, he went back to the hall to make his report. Picking up their court tablets to show their solemn intentions, the Rulers of Darkness said to both of the Pilgrims, “Great Sages, there is nowhere in the nether region for you to look up the impostor’s name. You must seek discrimination in the world of light.”

Hardly had they finished speaking when the Nun Kṣiṭigarbha said, “Wait a moment! Wait a moment! Let me ask Investigative Hearing to listen for you.” That Investigative Hearing happens to be a beast that usually lies beneath the desk of Kṣiṭigarbha. When he crouches on the ground, he can in an instant perceive the true and the false, the virtuous and the wicked among all short-haired creatures, scaly creatures, hairy creatures, winged creatures, and crawling creatures, and among all the celestial mortals, the earthly mortals, the divine mortals, the huma mortals, and the spirit mortals resident in all the cave Heavens and blessed lands in the various shrines, rivers, and mountains of the Four Great Continents. In obedience, therefore, to the command of Kṣiṭigarbha, the beast saluted himself in the courtyard of the Hall of Darkness, and in a little while, he raised his head to say to his master, “I’ve the name of the fiend but I can’t announce it in his presence. Nor can we give assistance in capturing him.”

“What would happen,” asked Kṣiṭigarbha, “if you’re to announce his name?”

"I fear then," replied Investigative Hearing, "that the monster-spirit might unleash his violence to disturb our treasure hall and ruin the peace of the office of darkness."

"But why," asked his master again, "can't we give assistance in capturing him?" Investigative Hearing said, "The magic power of that monster-spirit is no different from the Great Sage Sun's. How much power do the gods of the nether region possess? That's why we can't capture him."

"How, then, shall we do away with him?" asked Kṣiṭigarbha. Investigative Hearing answered, "The power of God is limitless." Waking up all at once, Kṣiṭigarbha said to the two Pilgrims, "Your forms are like a single person, and your powers are exactly the same. If you want clear distinction between the two of you, you must go to the Thunderclap Monastery, the abode of God."

"You're right! You're right!" shouted both of them in unison. "We'll go to have this thing sett led before the Religious Patriarch in the Western Heaven." The Rulers of Darkness of all 10 Chambers accompanied them out of the hall before they thanked Kṣiṭigarbha who returned to the Jade Cloud Palace. The ghost attendants were then told to close up the fortified passes of the nether region and we'll leave them for the moment. Look at those 2 Pilgrims! Soaring on cloud and darting on fog, they fought their way up to the Western Heaven and a testimonial poem says:

*If one's 2 minds, disasters he'll breed; he'll guess and conjecture both far and near.  
He seeks a good horse or the 3 Dukes's office or the seat of 1<sup>st</sup> rank there in Golden Chimes.  
He'll war unceasing in the north and south; not keep still assailing both east and west.  
You must learn of no mind in the gate of Chan and let the holy babe be formed thus quietly.*

Tugging and pulling at each other, the 2 of them brawled in mid-air as they proceeded and finally they reached the Thunderclap Treasure Monastery on the Spirit Vulture Mountain in the great Western Heaven. At that time the 4 Great Nuns, the Eight Great Diamond Kings, the 500 *Arhats*, the 3000 guardians of the faith, the mendicant nuns, the mendicant monks, the male and the female worshippers – all this holy multitude was gathered beneath the lotus seat of seven jewels to listen to a lecture by Siddhartha. His discourse had just reached the point on *the existent in the non-existent; the non-existent in the non-non-existent; the form in the formlessness; the emptiness in the non-emptiness. For the non-existent is the existent and the non-non-existent is the non-existent. Formlessness is verily form; non-emptiness is verily emptiness. Emptiness is indeed emptiness; form is indeed form. Form has no fixed form; thus form is emptiness. Emptiness has no fixed emptiness; thus emptiness is form. The knowledge of emptiness is not emptiness; the knowledge of form is not form. When names and action mutually illuminate, then one has reached the wondrous sound.* As the multitude saluted their heads in submission and recited in unison these words of a god, Siddhartha caused celestial flowers to descend upon them in profusion. Then he said to the congregation, "You're all of one mind but take a look at two Minds in competition and strife arriving here."

When the congregation looked up, there were indeed 2 Pilgrims locked in a clamorous battle as they approached the noble region of Thunderclap. The 8 Great Diamond Kings were so aghast that they went forward to bar the way, crying, "Where do you two think you're going?"

"A monster-spirit's," replied Great Sage, "assumed my appearance. I want to go below the treasure lotus platform and ask Siddhartha to make distinction between us." The Diamond Kings could not restrain them and the 2 monkeys brawled up to the platform. "Your disciple's," said Great Sage as he knelt before the Religious Patriarch, "accompanying the Tang Monk to journey to your treasure mountain and to beg you for true scriptures. I've exerted I don't know how much energy on our way in order to smelt demons and bind fiends. Sometime ago we ran into some bandits trying to rob us and in truth, your disciple on two occasions took a few lives. Master took offence and banished me, refusing to allow me to salute with him to the golden form of Siddhartha. I'd no choice but to flee to South Sea and tell Guanyin of my woes. Little did I anticipate that this monster-spirit would falsely assume my voice and my appearance and then strike down Master, taking away even our luggage. My younger brother, Awakened to Purity followed him to my native mountain only to be told by the crafty words of this fiend that he'd another true monk ready to be the scripture pilgrim. Awakened to Purity managed to escape to South Sea to inform Guanyin of everything. Whereupon the Nun told your disciple to return with Awakened to Purity to my mountain, as a result of which the two of us fought our way to South Sea and then to the celestial palace. We went also to see the Tang Monk as well as the Rulers of Darkness but no one could tell us apart. For this reason I make bold to come here, and I beg you in your great compassion to fling wide the great gate of means. Grant unto your disciple your discernment of the right and the perverse, so that I may again accompany the Tang Monk to salute your golden form in person, acquire the scriptures to bring back to the Land of the East, and forever exalt the great faith."

What the congregation heard was 1 statement made by 2 mouths in exactly the same voice and none of them could distinguish between the 2 Pilgrims. Siddhartha however, was the only 1 who had the perception; he was about to make his revelation when a pinkish cloud floating up from the south brought to them Guanyin who saluted to a god. Pressing his palms together, our God said, "Guanyin, the Honoured One, can you tell which the true Pilgrim's and which's the false one?"

"They came to your disciple's humble region the other day," replied the Nun, "but I'd truly not distinguish between them. They then went to both the Palace of Heaven and the Office of Earth but even there they could not be recognised. I've come therefore especially to beg Siddhartha to do this on the true Pilgrim's behalf."

Smiling, Siddhartha said, "Though all of you possess vast religion power and are able to observe the events of the whole universe, you can't know all the things therein, nor do you've the knowledge of all the species." When the Nun asked for further revelation, Siddhartha said, "There're five kinds of mortals in the universe and they are: the celestial, the earthbound, the divine, the human, and the ghostly. There are also five kinds of creatures, and they are: the short-haired, the scaly, the hairy, the winged, and the crawling. This fellow is not celestial, earthbound, divine, human, or ghostly, nor is he short-haired, scaly, hairy, winged, or crawling. But there are however, four kinds of monkeys which also do not belong to any of these ten species."

"May I inquire," said the Nun, "which four kinds they're?"

"The first's," said Siddhartha, "the intelligent stone monkey who *knows transformations, recognises the seasons, discerns the advantages of earth, and is able to alter the course of planets and stars.* The second's the red-assed baboon who's *knowledge of yin and yang, understands human affairs, is adept in its daily life, able to avoid death, and lengthen its life.* The third's the bare-armed gibbon who can *seize the sun and the moon, shorten a thousand mountains, distinguish the auspicious from the inauspicious, manipulate planets, and stars.* The fourth's the sixth-eared macaque? who's *a sensitive ear, discernment of fundamental principles, knowledge of past, future, and comprehension of all things.* These four kinds of monkeys are not classified in the ten species, nor are they contained in the names between Heaven and Earth. As I see the matter, that specious Wukong must be a six-eared macaque, for even if this monkey stands in one place, he can possess the knowledge of events a thousand miles away and whatever a man may say in that distance. That's why I describe him as a creature who's *a sensitive ear, discernment of fundamental principles, knowledge of past, future, and comprehension of all things.* The one who's the same appearance and the same voice as the true Wukong's a sixth-eared macaque."

When the macaque heard how Siddhartha had announced his original form, he shook with fear; leaping up quickly, he tried to flee. Siddhartha however, at once ordered the 4 Nuns, the 8 Diamond Kings, the 500 *Arhats*, the 3000 guardians of the faith, the mendicant monks, the mendicant nuns, the male worshippers, the female worshippers, Guanyin, and Liberation to have him completely encircled. The Great Sage Sun also wanted to rush forward but Siddhartha said, "Wukong, don't move. Let me capture him for you." The macaque's hair stood on end, for he supposed that he would be unable to escape. Shaking his body quickly, he changed at once into a bee, flying straight up. Siddhartha threw up into the air a golden alms-bowl that caught the bee and brought it down. Not perceiving that, the congregation thought the macaque had escaped. With a smile, Siddhartha said, "Be silent, all of you. The monster-spirit's not escaped. He's underneath this alms-bowl of mine." The congregation surged forward and lifted up the alms-bowl; a sixth-eared macaque in his original form indeed appeared. Unable to contain himself anymore, the Great Sage Sun raised his iron rod and killed it with one blow on the head. To this day this species of monkey has remained extinct. Moved to pity by the sight, Siddhartha exclaimed, "My goodness! My goodness!"

"You'd not have compassion on him, Siddhartha," said Great Sage. "He wounded my master and robbed us of our wraps. Even according to the law, he's guilty of assault and robbery in broad daylight. He should have been executed."

Siddhartha said, "Now you go back quickly to accompany the Tang Monk here to seek the scriptures."

As he respected to thank a god, the Great Sage said, "Let me inform Siddhartha, that it is certain that my master will not want me back. If I go to him now and he rejects me, it's simply a waste of effort. I beg you to recite the Loose-Fillet Spell instead so that I can give back your golden fillet. Let me return to secular life."

"Stop such foolish thought," said Siddhartha, "and don't be mischievous! If I ask Guanyin to take you back to your master, you'd have no fear that he will reject you. Take care to protect him on his journey and in due time *when merit's done and Extinguishment's home, you'll, too, sit on a lotus throne.*"

When she heard that, Guanyin pressed together her palms to thank the sage's grace, after which she led Wukong away by mounting the clouds. They were followed at once by her disciple, Liberation, and the white cockatoo. Soon they arrived at the thatched hut, and when Sand-monk saw them, he quickly asked his master to salute at the door to receive them. "Tang Monk," said the Nun, "the one who struck you the other day was a specious Pilgrim, a sixth-eared macaque. It was our good fortune that Siddhartha recognised him, and subsequently he was slain by Wukong. You must now take him back, for the demonic barriers on your journey are by no means entirely overcome, and only with his protection can you reach the Spirit Mountain and see a god for scriptures. Don't be angry with him anymore." Respecting, Tripitaka replied, "I obey your instruction."

At that moment when he and Sand-monk were thanking the Nun, they heard a violent gust of wind blowing in from the east: it was Bullseye 8 Rules who returned riding the wind with two wraps on his back. When Idiot saw the Nun, he raised his hand to salute her, saying, "Your disciple took leave of my master the other day and went to the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain to look for our luggage. I saw indeed a specious Tang Monk and another specious 8 Rules, both of whom I struck dead. They were two monkeys. Then I went inside and found the wraps, and examination revealed that nothing was missing. I mounted the wind to return here. What, may I ask, has happened to the two Pilgrims?" The Nun thereupon gave him a complete account of how Siddhartha had revealed the origin of the fiend, and Idiot was thoroughly delighted. Master and disciples all saluted to give thanks. As the Nun went back to South Sea, the pilgrims were again united in their hearts and minds, their animosity and anger all dissolved. After they also thanked the village household, they put in order their luggage and the horse to find their way to the West once more. Thus it is that *midway parting upsets the 5 Phases; the fiend's defeat fuses primal light. Spirit returns to Mind and Chan is still. 6 senses subdued, elixir's in sight.*

**059**  
**Tripitaka Tang's path is blocked at Mountain of Flames; Pilgrim Sun baits for the first time the palm-leaf fan**

*Seed-natures are basically the same: 'the sea accepts without end.'<sup>2</sup>  
10000 thoughts and cares are folly all; each form, each kind's in harmony.  
1 day with work and merit complete, perfected real nature towers on high.  
Let nothing amiss slip to east or west; lock on and tighten your hold.  
Pick and safe-keep it<sup>3</sup> in the elixir stove for smelting until it's red like the sun – bright and brilliant, all aglow.  
Astride the dragon you'll come and go.<sup>4</sup>*

Tripitaka obeyed the instruction of the Nun and took back Pilgrim. Along with 8 Rules and Sand-monk, he severed the 2 Minds and shackled both Ape and Horse. United in mind and effort, they pressed on toward the Western Heaven. We can't begin to describe how time flies like an arrow, how the seasons pass like the weaver's shuttle. After the torrid summer, the frosty scenery of late autumn again appeared. See *thin broken clouds as a west wind turns brisk; distant cranes cry, woods frosted like brocade. What a scene of timely sadness where endless hills stretch endless streams! To north borders the wild geese fly; to south lanes blackbirds return. The wayfarer's road is lonesome; the monk's robe swiftly grows cold.* <sup>5</sup>However, as master and disciples, the four of them, proceeded, they gradually felt a stifling heat. Reining in his horse, Tripitaka said, "It's now autumn. How is it that the heat is so intense?"

"You may not know of this," said 8 Rules, "but there's a Sun Kingdom on the journey to the West. <sup>6</sup>It's the place where the sun sets and that's why its popular name's *the Edge of Heaven*. During the time of late afternoon each day, the king will send people up to the battlements to beat the drums and blow the bugles, in order to dilute and weaken the sound of the sea boiling. For the sun is the true fire of grand yang, and when it drops into the Western Sea, it's like flames plunging into water and creating a deafening sizzle. If there were no drums or bugles to lessen the impact, the children in the city would all be killed. With this stifling heat here, this place must be where the sun sets."

When the Great Sage heard this, he could not hold back his laughter, saying, "Idiot, don't talk nonsense. If it's the Sūrya Kingdom you're thinking of, it's much too early. When you consider the sort of delays the Master has had to face night and day, it may take him several lifetimes – from youth to old age and back again – and even then he may not get there."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "if you say that this is not the place where the sun sets, then why is it so hot?"

"There must be something wrong with the climate," said Sand-monk, "so that you've summer weather in autumn." As the three of them debated like that, they came upon several buildings by the road, all having red tiles on the roof, red bricks on the wall, red painted doors, and red lacquered-wood benches. Everything in fact was red. As Tripitaka dismounted he said, "Wukong, go and ask in that house and see if you can uncover the reason for the heat."

Putting away his golden-hooped rod, the Great Sage straightened out his clothes and affected a civil manner as he left the main road to walk up to the house. Just then an old man emerged from the main door *who wore a not quite yellow and not quite red robe of grass cloth; his head had on a not quite blue and not quite black hat of bamboo-splint; hands held a not quite crooked and not quite straight staff of knotted bamboo; feet trod on a pair of not quite new and not quite old calf-length leather boots. His face was like red bronze; beard seemed like white chains. 2 aged eyebrows topped his lustrous eyes; 1 grinning mouth revealed some teeth of gold.* When he caught sight of Pilgrim all of a sudden, the old man was somewhat startled. Leaning on his bamboo staff, he shouted, "What sort of a weird creature are you and where're you from? What're you doing here before my door?"

Saluting deeply, Pilgrim said, “Old Patron, please don’t be afraid of me. I’m no weird creature. This poor monk’s been sent by imperial commission of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go seek scriptures in the West. There’re altogether four of us, master and disciples. We’ve just arrived in your noble region and when we feel how hot the weather’s, we want very much to know what the reason is for it and what the name of the land here’s. I’ve come especially to seek your instruction.”

Greatly relieved, the old man smiled and said, “Elder, please don’t be offended. This old man’s somewhat dim-sighted just now and I’d not quite recognise you.”

“Not at all,” replied Pilgrim.

Then the old man asked him again, “Where’s your master?”

“Over there,” said Pilgrim, “the one standing on the main road south of us.”

“Please ask him to come! Please ask him to come here!” said the old man.

Delighted, Pilgrim waved at Tripitaka who immediately approached with 8 Rules and Sand-monk, leading the white horse and poling the luggage. They all saluted to the old man. When the old man saw how distinguished Tripitaka appeared and how strange 8 Rules and Sand-monk looked, he was both startled and delighted. He had no choice however but to invite them inside to be seated before he asked his houseboys to serve tea and to prepare a meal. When Tripitaka heard him, he rose to thank him saying, “May I ask the *Gong-gong*” why it’s that such intense heat returns to the autumn of your noble region?”

“Our humble region’s,” replied the old man, “named the Mountain of Flames. There’s neither spring nor autumn here; all four seasons are hot.”

“Where is this mountain?” asked Tripitaka. “Is it on the way to the West?”

“You can’t go to the West,” replied the old man, “for that mountain, about sixty miles from here, sits squarely on the main road. It’s covered with flames for over eight hundred miles, and all around not even a single blade of grass can grow. If you walk on this mountain, you’ll turn to liquid even if you’ve a bronze skull and an iron body.” Paling with horror, Tripitaka dared not ask another question.

Just then, a young man passed by the front door, pushing a red cart and calling, “Rice-puddings!” Pulling off one piece of hair that he changed into a copper penny, the Great Sage went out to the young man to buy his puddings. After taking the money, and without dickerer over the price, the man at once untied the wrap on his cart and took out a piece of steaming hot rice-pudding to hand over to Pilgrim. When it touched the palm of his hands, Pilgrim felt as if he had received a piece of lit charcoal or glowing nail taken from the blacksmith’s stove. Look at him! He switched the pudding from the left hand to the right hand and back again to the left, and all he could say was “Hot! Hot! Hot! I can’t eat this!”

“If you’re afraid of heat,” said the man, chuckling, “don’t come here. It’s this hot around this place.”

“Look, fella,” said Pilgrim, “you’re not quite reasonable. The proverb says *without heat or cold, five grains won’t grow*. But the heat of this place is intense! Where do you get your flour for the pudding?” The man said, “*If you rice-pudding flour desire, mortal Iron-Fan inquire.*”

“What has Mortal Iron-Fan got to do with it?” asked Pilgrim. The man said, “That Mortal Iron-Fan happens to have a palm-leaf fan. If he lets you’ve it, one wave of the fan will extinguish the fire; the second will produce a breeze, and the third will start the rain. Only then can we sow and reap in due seasons, and that is how we produce the five grains. Without the mortal and the fan, not a blade of grass will grow in this region.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim dashed inside and handed the piece of rice-pudding to Tripitaka, saying, “Relax, Master! Don’t get anxious before you’ve to. Eat the pudding first, and I’ll tell you something.” Holding the pudding in his hand, the elder said to the old man of the house, “*Gong-gong*, please take some pudding.”

“I’ve not even served you tea or rice,” answered the old man. “Would I dare eat your pudding?” Smiling, Pilgrim said, “Dear Sir, you need not bestow on us any tea or rice. But let me ask you instead where does the Mortal Iron-Fan live?”

“Why do you ask?” said the old man.

Pilgrim said, “Just now the pudding peddler said that this mortal has in his possession a palm-leaf fan. If he lets us have it, one wave of the fan will extinguish the fire, the second will bring on a breeze, and the third will start the rain. Then the people of your region can sow and reap the five grains for your livelihood. I’d like to find him and ask for the fan to extinguish the Mountain of Flames. We’ll be able to pass then, and you people may also find a more stable existence by being able to plant and harvest according to the seasons.”

“Yes,” replied the old man, “what the peddler said was correct. But you people don’t have any gifts, and I fear that the sage will be unwilling to come here.”

“What sort of gifts does he want?” asked Tripitaka. The old man said, “The families of the region will seek an audience with the mortal once every ten years, and, as First Meeting presents, they must offer four bulls and four sheep, rare flowers and fine fruits in season, chickens, geese, and mellow juice. After cleansing themselves in ritual baths, they will go up in all sincerity to his mortal mountain to beg him come here to exercise his power.”

“Where is that mountain located,” asked Pilgrim, “and what’s its name? How many miles away? I’ll go ask him for the fan.”

“The mountain,” replied the old man, “is southwest of here, and it bears the name of Jade Cloud Mountain. In the mountain there is a cave by the name of the Palm-Leaf Cave. When the believers from our region go to worship on that mountain, the round trip takes approximately a month, for the distance is slightly over one thousand four hundred and fifty miles.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said Pilgrim with a laugh. “I’ll be back in no time.”

“Wait a moment,” said the old man, “take some food first, and let us prepare you some dried goods. You’ll need two other companions, for there’s no human habitation on that road but there are plenty of tigers and wolves. You can’t reach there in one day. It’s not fun, you know.”

“No, no! I don’t need any of that,” said Pilgrim, laughing. “I’m going now!”

Hardly had he finished speaking when he immediately disappeared. “Oh, sire!” said the old man, greatly alarmed. “So you’re a divine man who can soar on cloud and fog!” We’ll not continue to tell you how that family doubled its effort to be hospitable to the Tang Monk. Pilgrim arrived at the Jade Cloud Mountain instantly. He stopped his auspicious luminosity, and as he searched for the entrance of the cave, he heard the sound of a woodcutter chopping in the forest. When Pilgrim drew near, he heard the man reciting: “*By yonder clouds my dear, old forest I’ll know though wild grass, rough boulders hide the path below. When I see morning rain in western hills, the south brook will overflow as I return.*”

Pilgrim went forward to salute him saying, “Brother Woodsman, please accept my salute.”

The woodcutter dropped his axe to return the greeting saying, “Where’re you going, Elder?”

“May I inquire,” said Pilgrim, “whether this is the Jade Cloud Mountain?”

The woodcutter replied, “It’s.”

“I understand there’s a Palm-Leaf Cave that belongs to the Mortal Iron-Fan,” said Pilgrim. “Where’s it?”

Smiling, the woodcutter said, “We’ve a Palm-Leaf Cave, all right but there is no Mortal Iron-Fan. There is only a Princess Iron-Fan who also bears the name of Demoness.”<sup>8</sup> “People claim that this mortal has a palm-leaf fan,” said Pilgrim, “which can extinguish the Mountain of Flames. Is she the one?”

“Exactly, exactly!” replied the woodcutter. “Because the sage has in her possession this treasure which can extinguish the fire and protect the families of other regions, she is commonly called the Mortal Iron-Fan. But the families of *our* region have no use for her; we only know her as Demoness who also happens to be the wife of the Mighty Bull Demon King.”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he was so startled that he paled visibly. He thought to himself, “I’m up against another fated enemy! In a previous year, we brought to submission that Red Boy<sup>9</sup> who was said to have been reared by this woman. When I ran into his uncle at the Child Destruction Cave of the Male-Undoing Mountain, <sup>10</sup>he already was filled with desire for vengeance and absolutely refused to give me the needed water. Now it is his parents that I’ve to face! How could I possibly succeed in borrowing the fan?”

When the woodcutter saw that Pilgrim had become lost in his deliberations, sighing to himself repeatedly, he said with a smile, “Elder, you’re someone who has left the family, and you’d have *no* anxious thoughts. Just follow this path eastward and you’ll find the Palm-Leaf Cave in less than five miles. Don’t worry.”

“To tell you the truth, Brother Woodsman,” said Pilgrim, “I’m the eldest disciple of the Tang Monk, a scripture pilgrim sent by the Tang court in the Land of the East to go to the Western Heaven. Some years back I’d a small feud with Red Boy, the son of Demoness, at the Fiery Cloud Cave. I feared that her hostility might cause her to refuse me the fan, and that was the reason for my anxiety.”

“A man,” replied the woodcutter, “must determine another’s appearance by examining his colour. You’d go now with the sole purpose of borrowing the fan and not be bothered by any old grudge. I’m sure you’ll succeed.” On hearing this, Pilgrim saluted deeply and said, “I thank Brother Woodsman for this instruction. I’ll go.”

He thus took leave of the woodcutter and went up to the entrance of the Palm-Leaf Cave where he found both of its doors tightly shut but lovely scenery outside. *Marvellous place! Truly rhis mountain uses rocks for bones and rocks form the essence of earth. The mist keeps moisture overnight; lichen and moss then add fresh green. The rugged shape soars to top Isle Peng, its secluded blooms as fragrant as Yingzhou’s. Beneath a few knotty pines the wild cranes rest;*

*On some sad willows the orioles speak.  
It’s indeed an ancient spot of a millennium,  
A mortal site of ten millennia.  
The phoenix sings in green paulownia trees;  
And living streams hide aged dragons.  
The path winds as beans and vines dangle;  
The stone steps ascend with the creepers.  
Apes of the peak wail, saddened by the moon rising;  
Birds recite on tall trees, gladdened by the bright sky.  
Two forests of bamboo, their shade cool as rain;  
One path of dense flowers, thick little brocade.  
From distant hills will white clouds often show;  
Formless, they drift where gentle breezes blow.*

Walking forward, Pilgrim cried out: “Big Brother Bull, open the door! Open the door!”

With a creak, the doors opened and out walked a young girl who had in her hands a flower basket and on her shoulder a little rake. Truly *she had no adornment but only rags on herself; her spirit was full, for she had the mind of Dao*. Pilgrim approached her with palms pressed together and said, “Little girl, please take the trouble of announcing me to your princess. I’m actually a monk journeying to acquire scriptures. It’s hard for me to cross the Mountain of Flames on this road to the West and I’ve come especially to borrow your palm-leaf fan.” The little girl said, “To which monastery are you attached and what your name is? Tell me and I’ll announce you.”

“I’m a priest from the Land of the East,” replied Pilgrim, “and my name’s Sun Wukong.”

The young girl turned around and went inside to kneel before Demoness saying, “Madam, there’s a priest outside our cave by the name of Sun Wukong who has come from the Land of the East. He wants to see you and ask to borrow the palm-leaf fan, so that he may cross the Mountain of Flames.”

When that Demoness heard Sun Wukong, those three words, it was as if salt was added to a fire and oil was poured on flames. *Billow-like, redness swelled in her cheeks; savage anger flared in her heart*. “This wretched ape!” she cried. “So he’s here today! Maids, bring out my armour and weapons.”

She put on her armour at once and holding 2 treasure swords of blue blade, she walked out of the cave. Pilgrim stepped aside to steal a glance at her and saw that she wrapped on *her head a flower-patterned scarf and wore a brocade priestly robe. A belt – 2 tiger tendons – bound her waist; her silk skirt was slightly hitched up. Phoenix-bill shoes, just 3 inches; trousers with knee-fringes of gold. Gripping treasure swords and shrieking she came looking fiercer than the moon dame*. <sup>11</sup>As she walked out of the door, Demoness shouted, “Where’s Sun Wukong?”

Pilgrim went forward to meet her, saluting, and said, “Sister-in-law, old monkey’s here to greet you.”

“Who’s your sister-in-law?” hissed Demoness, “and who wants your greeting?”

“The Bull Demon King of your household,” replied Pilgrim, “and old monkey once formed a fraternal alliance; there were in fact seven of us bond-brothers.<sup>12</sup> I understand that you, princess, are the consort proper of Big Brother Bull. Would I dare not address you as sister-in-law?”

“Wretched ape!” said Demoness. “If you’ve any regard for fraternal relations, then why did you ensnare my son?” Pretending not to know, Pilgrim asked, “Who’s your son?”

“He’s the Red Boy,” answered Demoness, “The Great King Holy Child of the Fiery Cloud Cave by the Dried Pine Stream at the Roaring Mountain who was brought down by you. I was just wondering where I’d go to find you for vengeance, and you delivered yourself at the door. You think I’d spare you?”

Smiling as broadly as he could to try to placate her, Pilgrim said, “Sister-in-law, you’ve not quite probed to the depth of the matter, and you’ve wrongly blamed old monkey. Your boy took my master captive and even wanted to steam or boil him. It was fortunate that the Nun Guanyin subdued him and rescued my master. Now he has become the Boy Skilled in Wealth at the Nun’s place; having received from her the right fruit, he now undergoes neither birth nor death and he experiences neither filth nor cleanliness. He shares the same age as Heaven and Earth, the same longevity as the sun and the moon. Instead of thanking old monkey for the kindness of preserving your son’s life, you blame me. Is that fair?”

“You smart-mouthed ape!” said Demoness. “Though my son was not killed, how could I ever get him back so that I’d see him again?” Smiling, Pilgrim said, “If you want to see your boy, that’s easy. Lend me your fan so that I can extinguish the fire. After I accompany my master across the mountain, I’ll go at once to the Nun of South Sea and bring him back for you to see, and I’ll return your fan at the same time. Is there anything wrong with that? At that time, you can examine him thoroughly to see if there’s any harm done to him. If there is, then you can rightfully blame me. But if you find him even more handsome than ever, then you’d thank me indeed.”

“Monkey devil!” cried Demoness. “Stop wagging your tongue. Stretch out your head and let me hack you a few times with my sword. If you can endure the pain, I’ll lend you the fan. If you can’t, I’ll send you to see King Yama right away.” Folding his hands before him, Pilgrim walked forward and said, laughing, “Sister-in-law, no need for further talk. Old monkey will stretch out his bald head right now and you may hack me as many times as you please. You may stop when your strength runs out. But you must lend me your fan then.”

Without permitting further discussion, Demoness raised her hands and chopped at Pilgrim’s head some ten or fifteen times. Our Pilgrim thought that it was all a game. Growing fearful, Demoness turned around and wanted to flee. “Sister-in-law,” said Pilgrim, “where’re you going? Lend it to me quickly.”

“My treasure,” said Demoness, “is not to be lent lightly.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “have a taste of your brother-in-law’s rod!”

Dear Monkey King! With one hand he caught hold of her, and with the other he took out from his ear the rod that with one shake grew to the thickness of a bowl. That Demoness however, managed somehow to struggle free and turned to meet him with upraised swords. Pilgrim, of course, followed up at once and struck her with the rod. Before the Jade Cloud Mountain, the two of them discarded any fraternal sentiments; they were driven only by animosity. This was some battle! *The lady’s a fiend deft in magic arts who hates the monkey because of her son. Though Pilgrim’s anger has been much aroused, he still, for master’s sake, defers to her, saying at first he wants the palm-leaf fan and not using might on the gentle one. Foolish Demoness slashes with her sword though Monkey King would claim relations first. (How could a woman battle with a man who after all would a woman suppress?) How ferocious is this one’s golden-hooped iron rod! How thick and fast are that one’s blue and frosty blades!*

*A blow on the face – a slash on the head – they bitterly fight and refuse to quit. Left and right they parry with martial skill; back and front they cover most craftily. In their battle they are so wholly rapt that they hardly notice the sun has set. Swiftly Demoness takes out her true fan and one wave brings the gods and ghosts distress.* Demoness fought with Pilgrim until dark; when she saw how heavy the rod of Pilgrim was and what great skills he had as a fighter, she knew that she could not prevail against him. She took out her palm-leaf fan and fanned Pilgrim once: a strong gust of cold wind at once blew him completely out of sight while she returned to her cave in triumph. Drifting and soaring in the air, Great Sage could not stop at all: he sank to the left but he was unable to touch ground; he dropped to the right but he could not remain still. The wind bore him away like a *cyclone dispatching fallen leaves, a stream sweeping some withered flowers*. On he tumbled for a whole night and only by morning did he finally drop down on a mountain. Hugging a rock on the summit with both his hands, he rested for a long while before he looked around. Then he recognised that this was the Little Sumeru Mountain. Heaving a lengthy sigh, Great Sage said, “What a formidable woman! How in the world did she manage to send old monkey back to this place? I remember I once asked for the assistance of the Nun Lingji here some years past to subdue the fiend Yellow Wind in order to rescue my master. <sup>13</sup>The Yellow Wind Ridge is about three thousand miles due north of here. Since I’m blown back here from the road to the West, I must’ve travelled in a south-easterly direction for who knows how many tens of thousands of miles. I think I’d better go down there to talk to the Nun Lingji and see if I can find my way back.”

As he thought to himself like that, he heard loud chiming bells. He hurried down the slope to reach the temple where he was recognised by the worker at the front gate who immediately went inside to announce: “The hairy-faced Great Sage who came some years back to ask the Nun to go subdue the fiend Yellow Wind’s here again.”

Knowing it was Wukong, the Nun quickly left his treasure throne to meet his visitor and to greet him, saying, “Congratulations! Have you acquired the scriptures already?”

“Not quite, not quite!” replied Wukong. “It’s still too early.”

“If you’ve not yet reached Thunderclap,” said Lingji, “why is it that you’ve returned to this humble mountain?”

Pilgrim said, “Since that year when you’re kind enough to help us subdue the fiend Yellow Wind, we’ve gone through countless ordeals on our journey. We’ve now arrived at the Mountain of Flames but we can’t proceed. When we asked the natives there, they said that the palm-leaf fan belonging to a mortal Iron-Fan could extinguish the fire. Old monkey went to visit her and discovered that that mortal was in fact the wife of the Bull Demon King, the mum of Red Boy. Because she claimed that she could no longer see her son frequently since I’d sent him to be the youth attendant of the Nun Guanyin, she regarded me as her worst enemy, refused to lend me the fan, and fought with me. When she saw how heavy my rod was, she fanned me once with her fan and I drifted all the way back here before I dropped down. That’s why I’ve intruded upon your abode to ask you for the way back. How many miles are there from here to the Mountain of Flames?”

Laughing, Lingji replied, “That woman is named Demoness, and she’s also called Princess Iron-Fan. Her palm-leaf fan happens to be a spiritual treasure begotten of Heaven and Earth at the back of Mount Kunlun at the time when chaos divided. It is a finest leaf of the supreme yin, and that is why it can extinguish all fires. If a man is fanned by it, he will drift for eighty-four thousand miles before the cold wind subsides. There are only some fifty thousand miles between my place here and the Mountain of Flames. It is only because the Great Sage has the ability to halt the clouds that he is able to stop. No mortal person can possibly stand still after such a short distance!”

“Formidable! Formidable!” exclaimed Pilgrim. “How could my master overcome this hurdle?”

“Relax, Great Sage,” said Lingji. “It is actually the affinity of the Tang Monk that you’ve landed here. This will ensure your success.”

“How so?” asked Pilgrim.

Lingji said, “In years past when I received the instructions from Siddhartha, I was given a Flying-Dragon Staff and a Wind-Arresting Elixir. The staff was used to subdue the wind demon but the elixir has never been used. I’ll give it to you now, and you can be certain that that fan will be unable to move you. You can take the fan, extinguish the fire, and achieve your merit then.” Pilgrim saluted deeply at once to thank him whereupon the Nun took out from his sleeve a tiny silk bag in which there was the Wind-Arresting Elixir. The pellet was firmly sewn onto the underside of Pilgrim’s collar with needle and thread. Then the Nun saw Pilgrim out the door, saying, “There’s not time for me to entertain you. Go toward the northwest and you’ll find the mountain home of Demoness.”

Taking leave of Lingji, Pilgrim mounted the cloud somersault and went back to the Jade Cloud Mountain. In a moment he arrived and, beating the door with his iron rod, shouted: “Open the door! Open the door! Old monkey wants to borrow the fan!”

The maid inside the door hurriedly went to report: “Madam, the person who wants to borrow the fan is here again.” On hearing this, Demoness became fearful, saying, “This wretched ape’s truly able! When I fan someone with my treasure, he’ll have to drift eighty-four thousand miles before he can stop. This ape was blown away not long ago. How could he return so soon? This time, I’m going to fan him three or four times so that he’ll be unable to come back at all.” She got up quickly, and after putting on her armour properly, she picked up both of her swords and walked out of the door, saying, “Pilgrim Sun, aren’t you afraid of me? Are you here seeking death once more?”

“Don’t be so stingy, Sister-in-law,” said Pilgrim, chuckling. “Please lend me your fan. I’m a gentleman with an excess of honesty, not a small man who doesn’t return what he borrows.”

“You brazen baboon!” scolded Demoness. “You’re so impudent, so empty-skulled! I’ve yet to avenge the wrong of having my son taken. How could I possibly grant you the wish of borrowing the fan? Don’t run away! Have a taste of this old lady’s swords!” Great Sage, of course, was not to be intimidated; he wielded the iron rod to meet her. The two of them charged each other and closed in some six or seven times, when Demoness’s arms began to weaken even as Pilgrim Sun grew stronger than ever. When she saw that the tide was turning against her, she took out the fan and fanned Pilgrim once. He however, stood there without moving at all. Putting away his iron rod, he said to her, full of smiles, “This time is not the same as last time! You can fan all you want. If old monkey budes a teeny bit, he’s not a man!” Demoness indeed gave him a couple more but he remained unmoved. Horrified, Demoness put away her treasure and dashed inside the cave, tightly shutting the doors behind her.

When Pilgrim saw her shutting the doors, he resorted to his other abilities. Tearing open his collar, he took out the Wind-Arresting Elixir and placed it in his mouth instead. With one shake of his body, he changed into a tiny mole cricket and crawled inside through a crack in the door. There he found Demoness crying, “I’m terribly thirsty! Bring me some tea.” The maid attending her took up a pot of fragrant tea and filled the cup so hurriedly that bubbles welled up. Delighted by what he saw, Pilgrim spread his wings and dived right into the bubbles.

As she was extremely thirsty, Demoness grabbed the tea and finished it in two gulps. Pilgrim by then already reached her stomach; changing back into his true form, he shouted, “Sister-in-law, lend me your fan!” Turning white, Demoness cried, “Little ones, have you shut the front door?”

“We’ve,” they all replied. “If you’ve shut the door,” she said, “then how is it that Pilgrim Sun is making noises in our house?”

“He’s making noises in your body,” said one of the maids.

“Pilgrim Sun,” said Demoness, “where are you playing your tricks?”

“Old monkey in all his life hasn’t known how to play tricks,” said Pilgrim. “What I rely on are all real competences, genuine abilities. I’m now having a little fun in my esteemed Sister-in-law’s stomach! I’m, as the saying goes, seeing right through you! I know how thirsty you must be, so let me send you a ‘sitting bowl’ to relieve your thirst.” Suddenly he shoved his foot down hard and unbearable pain shot through Demoness’s lower abdomen, sending her tumbling to the floor and moaning. “Please don’t refuse me, Sister-in-law,” said Pilgrim, “I’m presenting you with an added snack<sup>14</sup> for your hunger.” He jerked his head upward, and unbearable pain coursed through Demoness’s heart. She began to roll all over the ground, the pain turning her face yellow and her lips white. All she could do was to cry out, “Brother-in-law Sun, please spare my life!”

Only then did Pilgrim stop his movements, saying, “Do you now recognise me as your brother-in-law? I’ll spare you for the sake of Big Brother Bull. Bring out the fan quickly for me to use.” Demoness said, “Brother-in-law, I’ve the fan. You come out and take it.”

“Bring it out and let me see it first,” said Pilgrim.

Demoness told one of her maids to hold up a palm-leaf fan and stand on one side. When Pilgrim crawled up to her throat and saw it, he said, “Since I’m going to spare you, Sister-in-law, I’ll not scratch a hole in your rib cage to come out. I’ll leave through your mouth. Open it three times.” That Demoness did as she was told, and Pilgrim at once flew out as a mole cricket that then alighted on the palm-leaf fan. Demoness did not even see him; she opened her mouth three times and kept saying, “Brother-in-law, please come out.” Changing at once into his original form, Pilgrim took the fan in his hand and said, “I’m right here. Thanks for lending it to me.” He started to walk out of the cave in big strides; the little ones hurriedly opened the door to let him out of the cave.

Mounting the clouds, Great Sage headed back toward the east and, in a moment, arrived at his destination, dropping down beside the red-brick wall. 8 Rules was delighted when he saw him. “Master,” he shouted, “Elder Brother has returned!” Tripitaka came out of the house with the old man and Sand-monk to greet Pilgrim, and they all went back inside. Pilgrim stood the fan to one side and asked,

“Sir, is this the fan?”

“It is, it is,” replied the old man.

Highly pleased, the Tang Monk said, “Worthy disciple, you’ve made a great merit but you must have worked very hard to acquire this treasure.”

“No need to talk about the hard work,” replied Pilgrim, “but who do you think is that Mortal Iron-Fan? It’s actually the wife of the Bull Demon King, the mum of Red Boy whose name is also Demoness. She is also called the Princess Iron-Fan. I went to her cave to try to borrow the fan but she wanted to settle the old score with me, hacking me a few times with her swords. I used the rod to frighten her, and that was when she brought out this thing and gave me a fan. I drifted all the way back to the Little Sumeru Mountain where I was fortunate enough to see the Nun Lingji. He gave me a Wind-Arresting Elixir and pointed out to me the way back to the Jade Cloud Mountain. I saw Demoness again, and when she couldn’t drive me away with her fan this time, she retreated back into her cave. Old monkey then changed into a mole cricket to fly inside. She was just asking for tea, so I dived inside the tea bubbles and managed to get inside her stomach. When I waved my hands and feet, she had such unbearable pain that she couldn’t stop calling me brother-in-law and asking me to spare her. When she was finally willing to lend me her fan, I did spare her and brought back this fan. After we’ve crossed the Mountain of Flames, I’ll take it back to her.” On hearing this, Tripitaka thanked him repeatedly. Then master and disciples took leave of the old man.

They proceeded westward for some forty miles, and they began to feel the heat growing more intense and more oppressive. “My feet are on fire!” Sand-monk could only cry. “They are killing me!” said 8 Rules. Even the horse was trotting more rapidly than usual but because the ground was becoming hotter all the time, they found it exceedingly difficult to go forward. “Master,” Pilgrim said at length, “please dismount. And don’t move, Brothers. Let me use the fan to extinguish the fire. Allow the wind and rain to cool off the earth first before we try to cross this mountain.” Lifting high the fan, Pilgrim dashed up to the flames and fanned at them with all his might. On that mountain the blaze grew brighter than ever. He waved the fan a second time and the fire became more intense a hundredfold. He tried for a third time and the fire leaped ten thousand feet tall, roaring toward him. Pilgrim dashed away but already the hair on both his thighs was completely burnt off. He ran back to the Tang Monk, shouting, “Go back! Go back! The fire’s coming!”

Climbing on the horse, our elder galloped toward the east, followed by 8 Rules and Sand-monk. They retreated for some twenty miles before they rested. “Wukong,” said the elder, “what happened?”



"It's a mess!" replied Pilgrim, throwing the fan away. "She's tricked me!"

On hearing this, Tripitaka became utterly dejected. Tears streaming down his face, he could only say, "What'll we do?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "why did you yell for us to go back so hurriedly?"

"I fanned at the mountain once," said Pilgrim, "and the blaze grew brighter. I did it a second time and the fire became even more intense. A third wave of the fan made the flames leap up ten thousand feet tall. If I'd not run fast enough, all my hair would have been burned away."

With a chuckle, 8 Rules said, "You've often made the claim that you can be hurt neither by thunder nor by fire. How is it that you're afraid of fire now?"

"Oh, Idiot!" said Pilgrim. "You just don't know anything! On those occasions, I was always prepared, and therefore I'd not be hurt. Today I was only trying to extinguish the fire with the fan, and I didn't even make the fire-repellent sign, nor did I use magic to protect my body. So, the hair on both my thighs is burned up."

"If the fire's so intense," said Sand-monk, "and there's no way to get to the West, what's to be done?"

"Let's head for the direction where there's no fire," said 8 Rules.

"Which direction?" asked Tripitaka.

8 Rules said, "There's no fire in the east, the south, and the north."

"But which direction has scriptures?" Tripitaka asked again. 8 Rules said, "The West."

"I only want to go where the scriptures are," said Tripitaka.

Sand-monk said, *"Where there're scriptures, there's fire. Where there's no fire, there're no scriptures.* We're in some dilemma!"

As master and disciples were chatting like that, they heard someone calling, "Great Sage, please don't be distressed. Take some food first before you think of what you want to do."

The 4 of them turned to look and they saw an old man *who wore a wind-wafted cape and a cap of half-moon shape; who held a dragon-head cane and trod on iron-gaiter-ed boots.* He was followed by a demon with a hawk beak and a fish jowl. The demon's head was supporting a copper pan in which were placed some steamed cakes, puddings, and rice of yellow millet. The old man stood by the road and saluted saying, "I'm the local spirit of the Mountain of Flames. When I learned that the Great Sage and the holy monk could not proceed, I came to present you a meal."

"Food is of small concern to us at the moment," said Pilgrim. "How can we extinguish this fire so that my master can cross over the mountain?"

"If you want to extinguish the fire," said the local spirit, "you must ask the Demoness for the palm-leaf fan." Picking up the fan from the side of the road, Pilgrim said, "Isn't this the fan? But the blaze grew bigger than even when I fanned at it. Why?" When the local spirit saw it, he laughed and said, "This is not the real fan. You've been tricked."

"How can I get the real one?" asked Pilgrim.

Again saluting and smiling gently, the local spirit said, *"If you the real palm-leaf fan desire, then King Powerful you must inquire."*

060

Bull Demon King stops fighting to attend a lavish feast; Pilgrim Sun baits for the second time the palm-leaf fan

The local spirit said, "King Powerful is in fact the Bull Demon King."

"So, this fire of the mountain was set by the Bull Demon King," said Pilgrim, "and it was erroneously named the Mountain of Flames, right?"

"No, no," replied the local spirit, "but I daren't speak plainly unless the Great Sage's willing to pardon this humble deity."

"What offence is there?" said Pilgrim. "Go ahead and tell us."

The local spirit said, "This fire originally was set by the Great Sage."

"Where could I've been at the time?" said Pilgrim, his anger growing. "How could you babble like that? Am I an arsonist?"

"You can't possibly recognise me now," said the local spirit. "There was no such mountain in this place originally. Five centuries ago, when the Great Sage caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace, you're caught by Illustrious Sagacity<sup>1</sup> and taken in custody to Laozi. He placed you inside the brazier of eight trigrams, and after the process of refinement, the reactionary vessel was opened. You jumped out, kicking over the elixir oven in the process, and a few bricks still on fire dropped down to this spot. They were transformed into the Mountain of Flames. I was then the Daoist worker attending the brazier in the Tushita Palace. Since Laozi blamed me for carelessness, I was banished to become the mountain's local spirit."

"No wonder you're dressed like this!" said 8 Rules, somewhat annoyed. "You're actually a Daoist!"

Only half-believing what he heard, Pilgrim said, "Tell me further, why you said that I'd to fight King Powerful?"

"King Powerful," said the local spirit, "happens to be the husband of Demoness but he left her some time ago and is currently residing at the Cloud-Touching Cave of the Hoard-Thunder Mountain. A fox king of ten millennia used to be the cave-master there but he passed away, leaving behind a daughter by the name of Princess Jade Countenance and a vast fortune with no one to care for it. Two years ago, when she learned that the Bull Demon King had enormous magic powers, she was willing to give up all her wealth as dowry and take him in as her consort. The Bull King thus abandoned Demoness and hasn't paid her a visit since. Only if the Great Sage succeeds in finding him can you acquire the real fan. If he is willing to lend it to you, you'll be able to do three good deeds: one, enable your master to proceed on his journey; two, eliminate the blight of fire for the people of this region; and three, obtain a pardon for me so that I may return to Laozi in Heaven."

"Where is this Hoard-Thunder Mountain," asked Pilgrim, "and how far away is it?"

"Due south of here," said the local spirit, "about three thousand miles."

On hearing this, Pilgrim told 8 Rules and Sand-monk to protect their master with care, and he gave instruction as well to the local spirit to remain and keep them company. With a loud whoosh, he at once disappeared. In less than half an hour he came upon a tall mountain. He lowered his cloud and stood on the peak to look all around. It was indeed a fine mountain: *tall or not, its top touches the blue sky; deep or not, its roots reach the yellow spring. Before the mountain the sun's warm; behind the mountain the wind's cold; before the mountain the sun's warm though the winter plants do not know of it; behind the mountain the wind's cold: ice even in late summer, stays un-melted. The dragon lagoon joins a flowing brook; flowers bloom early by the cliff's tiger lair. Water flows like countless strands of flying jade and flowers bloom like bunches of brocade. Sinuous trees twist round the sinuous peak; craggy pines grow beyond the craggy rocks. Truly the mountain that's tall, the cliff that's sheer, the stream that's deep, the flower that's fragrant, the fruit that's pretty, the wisteria that's red, the pine that's blue, the willow that's jade-green – their features in all climes remain the same; hues stay vibrant in 10 millennia.* After he looked at this scenery for a long time, Great Sage walked down from the pointed summit to search for the way. He did not, in truth, know quite where to turn when a lissom young woman emerged from a shady pine forest, her hand holding a twig of fragrant orchid. Hiding himself behind some boulders, the Great Sage stared at her. She looked like a *coy, empire-toppling beauty in slow, sedate steps she walks. With a face like Wang Qiang's, <sup>2</sup> features like a girl of Chu, she seems like a flower able to speak; resembles a fragrant figure of jade. Her jet black hair-bun smartly rises high; eyes, mascara-greened, shine like autumn's pools. Beneath her silk skirt tiny shoes half-appear; from sleeves, just upturned, extend long, white wrists. How shall we speak of such seductive airs? Truly she has pearl-like teeth, ruddy lips, and moth-brows soft and smooth like the River Jin; she surpasses even Wenjun and Xue Tao.* <sup>3</sup>Gradually the girl drew near to the boulders. Saluting low to salute her, the Great Sage said slowly, "Nun, where're you going?"

As the girl did not notice him at first, she raised her head only when she heard his voice, and all at once she discovered how ugly the appearance of the Great Sage was. Terrified, she could neither retreat nor advance, and, trembling all over, she forced herself to reply, "Where've you come from? To whom are you addressing your question?"

The Great Sage thought to himself, "If I mention the business of seeking scriptures, I fear that she may be related to the Bull King. I'd better say something like I'm some sort of a relative who has come here to invite the demon king to return home. Perhaps that may be acceptable. "When the girl however, saw that he did not reply, her colour changed and she said with anger in her voice, "Who are you and how dare you question me?"

Saluting again and smiling, the Great Sage said, "I've come from the Jade Cloud Mountain. As this is my first visit to your noble region, I don't know my way. May I ask the Nun whether this is the Hoard-Thunder Mountain?"

"Yes," said the girl. "There is a Cloud-Touching Cave," said the Great Sage. "Where is it located?"

"Why do you want to find the cave?" asked the girl.

The Great Sage said, "I've been sent here by the Princess Iron-Fan of the Palm-Leaf Cave at Jade Cloud Mountain to fetch the Bull Demon King."

Enraged by this 1 statement, the girl grew red from ear to ear and began to scream, "That filthy slut! She's a real numbskull! It's not been two years since the Bull-King arrived in my house and he's sent back to her god knows how many pieces of jewels and precious stones how many bolts of silk and satin during that time. He provides her with firewood by the year and with rice by the month so that she can enjoy her life to her heart's content. Doesn't she know shame at all? Why does she want you to fetch him now?"

When the Great Sage heard these words, he knew that the girl had to be the Princess Jade Countenance. Deliberately pulling out his golden-hooped rod, he bellowed at her: "You bitch! You used your wealth to buy the Bull King. Indeed you got your man by throwing money away. Aren't *you* ashamed? And you dare castigate someone else?"

When that girl saw his savage appearance, she was so terrified that her spirit left her and her soul fled. Shaking all over, she turned and ran while the Great Sage gave chase from behind, still shouting and hollering at her. After they went through the pine forest, the entrance of the Cloud-Touching Cave immediately came into view. The girl dashed inside and slammed the door shut. Only then did the Great Sage put away his golden-hooped rod and pause to glance about. *Lovely place!*

*Luxuriant forest; precipitous cliffs; the broken shades of wisteria; the sweet, pure scent of orchids. A stream, gurgling jade, cuts through old bamboos; canny rocks know how to sport fallen blooms. Mist enshrouds the distant hills; the sun and moon shine through cloud-screens. Dragons recite and tigers roar; cranes cry and orioles recite. A loveable spot of pure serenity where jade flowers and grass are ever bright – no less divine than a Mount-Tai cave, 4it surpasses even Peng-Ying<sup>5</sup> of the seas.* Pilgrim enjoyed the scenery; the girl ran until she perspired heavily and her heart pounded. She dashed into the library where the Bull Demon King was quietly studying some books on elixir. Full of anguish, the girl fell onto his lap and began to wail, pinching her ears and scratching her cheeks. The Bull King smiled broadly and tried to placate her, saying, "Pretty Lady, don't be distressed. What's the matter?"

"Wretched demon!" cried the girl, jumping up and down. "You've just about killed me!"

"Why're you scolding me?" said the Bull-King, laughing.

"Because I lost my parents," said the girl, "I took you in so that I'd have protection and care. You've the reputation in the world of being a hero but you're actually a henpecked nitwit!"

On hearing this, the Bull-King embraced her and said, "Pretty Lady where've I done wrong? Tell me slowly and I'll apologise."

"Just now," said the girl, "I was taking a leisurely stroll outside the cave beneath the flowers to pick my orchids. I was stunned by a hairy-faced monk with a thunder god beak who suddenly barred my way and saluted to me. When I regained my composure and asked for his identity, he claimed that he's someone sent here by that Princess Iron-Fan to fetch the Bull Demon King. I tried to tell him off but he gave me a severe reprimand instead and even chased me with a rod. If I'd not run away so fast, I'd have been struck to death by him. Isn't this calamity brought on by you? You're killing me!"

When the Bull-King heard what she said, he apologised to her and treated her with great tenderness. Only after a long time was the girl pacified but then the Demon King became annoyed and said, "Pretty Lady, to tell you the truth though that Palm-Leaf Cave's an out of the way place, it's an unsullied and comfortable spot. My wife who's practiced self-cultivation since her youth's also a mortal who's attained the Way. She presides in fact over a rather strict household and there isn't a single male within it at the moment, not even a baby boy. How'd she have sent a man with a thunder-god beak to make demands here? This has to be a fiend from somewhere who's falsely assumed her name to search for me. Let me go out and have a look." *Dear Demon King!*

He strode out of the library and went up to the main hall to put on his armour. After he was suited up properly, he picked up a cast-iron rod and went out of the door crying, "Who's being so rowdy at my place?"

When Pilgrim caught sight of him, the figure he saw was quite different from that of five centuries ago. He saw that *he had had on a wrought-iron helmet, water polished and silver bright; wore a yellow gold cuirass lined with silk brocade; his feet were shod in a pair of pointed-toe and powdered-sole buckskin boots; waist was tied with a lion king belt of triple-braided silk. A pair of eyes that shone like bright mirrors; 2 thick eyebrows that glowed like red lightning. His mouth seemed like a bloody bowl; teeth stood like slabs of bronze. A roaring snort that made mountain gods cringe; an imposing stride that vile spirits feared. Famed in the 4 seas, he was named World-Wrecker, the Powerful of the West called Demon King.* Straightening his clothes, Great Sage walked forward and saluted deeply saying, "Eldest Brother, do you still recognise me?"

Returning his salute, the Bull-King said, "Aren't you Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven?"

"Indeed, I'm," replied the Great Sage. "I've not had the privilege of saluting you for a long time. Just now I'd to ask a girl before I got to see you again. You look better than ever. Congratulations!"

"Stop this clever talk!" bellowed the Bull King. "I heard that as a result of your causing great disturbance in the Celestial Palace, you're pinned beneath the Mountain of Five Phases by the Religious Patriarch. Recently liberated from your Heaven-sent calamity, you're accompanying the Tang Monk to see God for scriptures in the Western Heaven. But why did you bring harm to my son, Bull Holy Child, the master of Fiery Cloud Cave by the Dried Pine Brook on Roaring Mountain? I'm quite mad at you already. Why are you here also looking for me?"

Saluting again to him, the Great Sage said, "Don't wrongly blame me, Eldest Brother. At that time your son caught my master and wanted to eat his flesh. Your youngest brother was not able to get near him at all, and it was fortunate that the Nun Guanyin came to rescue my master. She persuaded your son to return to the right. Now he has become the Boy of Goodly Wealth, a rank higher even than yours, and he's enjoying the halls of ultimate bliss and the joys of everlasting life. Is there anything wrong with that? Why blame me instead?"

"You smart-mouthed ape!" scolded the Bull King. "I'll let you talk yourself free of the charge of hurting my son. But why did you insult my beloved concubine and attack her right at my door?"

With a laugh, the Great Sage said, "Because I'd a hard time trying to find you, I questioned that girl but I'd no idea that she was my second Sister-in-law. She scolded me a little, and I lost my head shortly and treated her rather roughly. I beg Eldest Brother to pardon me, please!"

"If you put it that way," said the Bull King, "I'll spare you for old time's sake. Leave!"

"I can't thank you enough," said the Great Sage, "for your great kindness. But I still have another matter that I must bring to you, and I beg you to be hospitable."

"Monkey," scolded the Bull King, "you don't know your limits! I've spared you already. Instead of going away, you stay here to pester me. What's this business about being hospitable?"

"To tell you the truth, Eldest Brother," said the Great Sage, "I was accompanying the Tang Monk on his westward journey but our path was blocked by the Mountain of Flames and we'd not proceed. When we asked the natives of that region, we learned that my esteemed Sister-in-law, Demoness, had in her possession a palm-leaf fan. Since it could be used to extinguish the fire, we went to your house and begged her to lend it to us. She adamantly refused. That's why I now come to you and beg you to extend to us the compassion of Heaven and Earth. Go with me to the place of my big Sister-in-law and persuade her to lend us the fan. As soon as the Tang Monk has safely crossed the Mountain of Flames, we'll return it to you."

When he heard these words, the Bull King could not suppress the fire leaping up in his heart. He gritted his teeth and shouted, "You claimed you're not rowdy but you wanted the fan all along. You must have insulted my wife first, and when she refused, you came to find me. What's more, you even chased my beloved concubine around! As the proverb says, *you mustn't slight a friend's wife of thine, nor must you snub a friend's concubine*. You've in fact insulted my wife and snubbed my concubine. How insolent can you be? Come up here and have a taste of my rod!"

"If you mention fight," said the Great Sage, "you'll not frighten me. But I've come to beg you for the fan in all earnestness. Please lend it to me!"

The Bull King said, "If you can withstand me for three rounds, I'll tell my wife to give it to you. If not, I'll kill you – just to relieve my wrath!"

"You're right, Eldest Brother," replied the Great Sage. "I've been rather remiss in visiting you and I don't know whether your martial skill is as good as previous years. Let's practice a little with our rods."

Without permitting further talk, the Bull King wielded his cast-iron rod, brought it down hard on his visitor's head, and it was met by the golden-hooped rod of the Great Sage. The 2 of them thus began quite a battle: *the golden-hooped rod, the cast-iron rod – their colours change and they speak no more as friends. That one says, "I still blame you for hurting my son, Monkey!"*

*This one says, "Your son's attained the Way so don't get mad!"*

*That one says, "How dare you be so brash as to approach my door?"*

*This one says, "I've good reason to give you a request."*

*1 wants the fan to protect the Tang Monk; 1 is too stingy to lend the palm-leaf. Words are exchanged, their old amity's gone; friendship destroyed, they have but anger left. The Bull King's rod like a dragon rears up; the Great Sage's rod comes, gods and ghosts take flight. Before the mountain they battle at 1st; then they rise jointly on auspicious clouds to show in mid-air their great magic might, to flaunt their powers in 5-coloured lights. 2 rods resound to shake the gates of Heaven – none's the stronger, they're evenly matched. Great Sage and the Bull King fought for over 100 rounds but no decision could be reached. In that moment when it was virtually impossible to separate the two of them, someone suddenly called out from the mountain peak: "Sire Bull, my Great King sends you his earnest invitation. Please come early so that the banquet may begin."*

On hearing this, the Bull King stopped the golden-hooped rod with his cast-iron rod and said, "Monkey, you stop for a moment. I've to attend a banquet in a friend's house first."

He dropped down at once from the clouds and went inside the cave to say to Princess Jade Countenance, "Pretty Lady, that man just now with a thunder-god beak happens to be the monkey, Sun Wukong's been driven away by the blows of my rod. He'll not dare return. I'm off to drink in a friend's house."

He took off his armour and put on instead a duck-green silk jacket. Walking outside, he mounted a water-repellent golden-eyed beast, and, after giving instructions to the little ones to guard the door, departed midway between cloud and fog toward the northwest. When the Great Sage standing on the tall summit saw him leave, he thought to himself, *I wonder what sort of friend that old bull's and where he's going to attend a banquet. Let old monkey follow him. Dear Pilgrim!* With 1 shake of his body he changed into a gust of wind to catch up with the Bull King and proceed with him. In a little while, they arrived at a mountain, and the Bull King soon disappeared. Collecting himself to change back into his true form, the Great Sage entered the mountain to look around, and he came upon a deep lagoon with lovely clear water. There was, beside the lagoon, a stone tablet, on which there was in large letters this inscription: Scattered-Rocks Mountain, Green Wave Lagoon. The Great Sage thought to himself: *That old bull must've gone into the water and an aquatic fiend's to be some kind of dragon spirit, fish spirit, or turtle spirit. Let old monkey go in also to have a look. Dear Great Sage!*

Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and with 1 shake of his body changed into a crab; neither too big nor too small, it weighed about 36 pounds. He leaped into the water with a splash and sank quickly to the bottom of the lagoon. There he saw all at once a towered gateway with finely carved openwork. Beneath the arch there was tied the water-repellent golden-eyed beast but it was waterless inside the gateway. Crawling through, the Great Sage stared all around and he heard the sound of poems coming from buildings still further in. This is what he saw: *scarlet halls and shelled arches uncommonly found in this world; roof tiles made of yellow gold; door frames formed by milk-white jade; railings built from coral twigs; spread screens of tortoise-shell inlay. Auspicious clouds hang over the lotus throne – the 3 Lights above, 7 the Milky Way below. Though it's not Heaven or the sea's treasure chest, this place quite rivals the island of Peng. Guests and hosts gather in a tall banquet hall; pearls stud the caps of officials great and small. They beckon jade girls to serve their ivory trays; urge divine maids to make merry verses. Long whales squeal; huge crabs exercise; scorpionfishes play flutes; iguanas roll drums. Rare, lustrous pearls light up the food and drink; nature's patterns are carved on kingfisher screens. Shrimp-whiskered curtains hang over corridors. 8 instruments<sup>8</sup> play in divine harmony, their glorious tones resound throughout the sky. Green-headed perch-cocottes stroke the zithers and red-eyed young boys<sup>9</sup> blow the flutes of jade. Perch matrons present the venison stripes; gold-phoenix hairpins crown the dragon girls. What they have to eat: the 8 treasure dainties<sup>10</sup> of Heaven's kitchen; to drink: the rich mellow brew from the purple mansion.<sup>11</sup>*

Sitting above in the middle honoured seat was the Bull Demon King while several female dragon spirits sat on his immediate left and right. Facing him was an old dragon spirit, attended by scores of dragon sons, dragon grandsons, dragon grandmas, and dragon daughters on both sides. They were toasting one another and drinking with abandon when the Great Sage Sun walked right in. The old dragon caught sight of him and he at once gave the order: "Seize that wild crab!"

The various dragon sons and grandsons surged forward and took hold of the Great Sage who assumed human speech, crying, "Spare me! Spare me!"

The old dragon said, "Where did you come from, wild crab? How dare you barge into our hall and hobble around without permission? Confess quickly and we'll spare your life!"

*Dear Great Sage!* With specious words of a lines to the poem of *Moon Over West River*, he made this confession: *"I dwell in a cave by the ridge since birth the lake's my livelihood. Of late time's passage's my body freed – my rank, Private Sidewise-Carriage. Treading on grass and trailing mud, I've never learned to walk properly. Untaught in law, I offend your kingly might; I beg your Grace to pardon me."*

When those spirits attending the banquet heard what he said, they all rose to salute the old dragon and say, "This is the first time that Private Crab's entered the royal palace and he's unfamiliar with the proper etiquette. We beg our lord to pardon him."

The old dragon expressed his consent and 1 of the spirits gave this command: "Release him. We'll stay the sentence of flogging. Let him go outside and wait on us."

The Great Sage dutifully gave his obedient reply before fleeing outside. Once he reached the towered gateway, he thought to himself, "This Bull-King's so fond of his cup. How'd I wait for him to leave here? And even when he leaves, he'll not lend me the fan. Why don't I steal his golden-eyed beast, change into his appearance, and go deceive that Demoness? I can then wangle her fan and help my master cross the mountain. That's a much better move." *Dear Great Sage!* Changing back into his original form all at once, he untied the reins of the golden-eyed beast and mounted the carved saddle. He rode it out of the lagoon's bottom and went up to the surface of the water. He then changed himself into the form of the Bull-King; whipping the beast and mounting the clouds, he reached the entrance of the Palm-Leaf Cave on the Jade Cloud Mountain in no time. "Open the door!" he cried.

2 maids inside immediately opened the door when they heard his call. When they saw moreover that it was the Bull-King, they rushed inside to report: "Madam, our sire's come home."

On hearing this, Demoness quickly straightened her hairdo and walked out of her room to receive him. Great Sage thus *dismounted to lead in the golden-eyed beast; in boldness he would deceive the fair lady*. As Demoness had only eyes of flesh, she could not recognise him. They entered the cave hand in hand, and she told the maids to present tea. When the whole family saw that the master had returned, each member treated him with great respect. In no time at all, the couple were exchanging greetings. "Madam," said the specious Bull King, "it's been a long time!"

"I wish the Great King ten thousand blessings," replied Demoness and then said, "the Great King's so partial toward his newlywed that he's forsaken this humble maid. Which gust of wind's today blown you back here?"

Smiling at her, Great Sage said, "I daren't forsake you. Since I was invited to join Princess Jade Countenance however, I was plagued by all kinds of domestic concerns as well as by the affairs of my friends. That's why I've stayed away for as long as I'd to take care of another household. Anyway, I heard recently that the fellow Wukong in the company of the Tang Monk's about to arrive at the Mountain of Flames. I fear that he may want to ask you for the fan. I hate him and we've yet to avenge our son's wrongs. When he comes, send someone to report to me at once so that I can seize him and have him chopped to pieces. Only that can bring us satisfaction."

On hearing this Demoness fell to weeping and said, "Great King, the proverb says: *a man without wife, his wealth's no boss; a woman with no husband herself has no boss*. My life's nearly taken by this monkey!"

When he heard that, the Great Sage pretended to be outraged. "When did this wretched ape pass through here?" he cried.

"He hasn't yet," replied Demoness. "But he came here yesterday to borrow our fan. Because he brought harm to our son, I put on my armour and went outside to hack at him with my swords. Enduring the pain, he addressed me even as sister-in-law, saying that he was once your bond-brother."

"There were indeed seven of us," said the Great Sage, "who entered into a fraternal alliance some five centuries ago."

"He didn't dare answer me at first," said Demoness, "even when I scolded him, nor did he dare raise his hands when I hacked him with the swords. Afterwards, I fanned him once and sent him away. But he found some sort of wind-arresting magic somewhere and came to our door again this morning to make noises. I used the fan on him once more but this time I'd not budge him at all. When I attacked him then with the swords, he wasn't so kind anymore. I was intimidated by the weight of his rod and ran inside the cave, tightly shutting the door. I didn't know where or how he got through but he managed to crawl into my stomach and almost took my life. I'd to address him several times as brother-in-law and give him the fan."

Again feigning dismay the Great Sage pounded his chest and said, "What a pity! What a pity! You've made a mistake, Madam! How could you give our treasure to that monkey? I'm so upset I'd die!"

Laughing, Demoness said, "Please don't get mad, Great King, I gave him a fake fan, just to get him away."

"Where did you put the real one?" asked the Great Sage.

"Relax! Relax!" replied Demoness. "It's in my possession." After she ordered the maids to prepare juice to welcome him, she took up the cup herself and presented it saying, "Great King, you may have your newfound joy but don't ever forget your proper wedded wife. Please have a cup of home brew."

The Great Sage did not dare refuse it; he had no choice in fact but to raise the cup and say to her, full of smiles, "Madam, please drink first. Because I'd to look after external property, I was away from you for a long time. You've been good enough to watch over our home day and night. Please accept my thanks."

Demoness took the cup and filled it some more before handing it to the Great King again saying, "As the ancients put it, a wife's one who manages but the husband's like a dad who provides support. What's there to thank me for?" Thus the 2 of them conversed with great courtesy before they sat down to drink and eat in earnest. Not daring to break his vegetarian diet, the Great Sage took only a few fruits to keep the conversation going. After drinking a few rounds, Demoness felt somewhat tipsy and her passion was gradually aroused. She began to move closer to the Great Sage Sun, rubbing against him and leaning on him. *Holding hands with him, she murmured affection; shoulder to shoulder, whispered endearment*. She took a mouthful of juice and then he took also a mouthful of juice from the same cup. They also traded fruits with their mouths. The Great Sage, of course, was feigning tenderness in all this, although he had no choice but to laugh and dally with her. Truly *"The muse's hook – The sorrow's broom"*<sup>12</sup> – *to banish all cares nothing's better than juice!*

*The man resolves to act with less restraint; the girl has slackened and begins to laugh. Her face reddens like a ripe peach; body sways like young willow. They mumble and murmur, thus the prattle grows; they pinch and fondle with flirtatious glee. Often she strokes her hair and wields her dainty hands. Her tiny feet she would wiggle frequently and shake her sleeves a few times purposely. She would lower her creamy neck; twist her slender waist. Amorous words would never leave her lips; gold buttons loosened, her bosom's half-revealed. Her reason truly totters for she is drunk. Rubbing her glazed eyes, she is almost disgraced*. When the Great Sage saw that she was acting with such abandon, he took care to bait her with the words, "Madam, where've you put the real fan? You must be careful constantly for I fear that Pilgrim Sun with his many ways of transformation will sneak in somehow and wangle it."

Giggling, Demoness spat out a tiny fan no bigger than an almond leaf. Handing it over to the Great Sage, she said, "Isn't this the treasure?" When he held it in his hand, the Great Sage could not believe what he saw and he thought to himself, "This little thing! How'd it extinguish the flames? Could this be another false one?" When Demoness saw him staring at the treasure in complete silence, she could not refrain from putting her powdered face up to Pilgrim's and calling out, "Dearest, put away the treasure and drink. What're you thinking of anyway?" Immediately the Great Sage took this opportunity to follow up with the question, "A tiny thing like this, how could it extinguish eight hundred miles of flames?" Since the juice had virtually overwhelmed her true nature, Demoness felt no constraint whatever and she at once revealed the truth, saying, "Great King, in these two years of separation, you must have given yourself over to pleasures night and day, allowing that Princess Jade Countenance to dissipate even your intelligence! How could you possibly forget how your own treasure works? Use your left thumb to press the seventh red thread attached to the fan's handle and utter the magic words, *Hui-xu-he-xi-xi-chui-hu*,<sup>13</sup> and it will grow to twelve feet long. This treasure can change in boundless ways. You may have eighty thousand miles of flames but one wave of the fan will extinguish them all."

Tucking these words firmly in his memory, the Great Sage put the fan inside his mouth before giving his own face a wipe to change back to his original form. "Demoness," he shouted, "take a good look at me to see if I'm your dear husband! How you've pestered me with all your shameful doings! Aren't you embarrassed?" So astonished was that woman by the sight of Pilgrim that she fell to the ground, kicking over the tables and chairs. She was smitten with such terrible shame that she could only cry, "I'm so mad I'd die! I'm so mad I'd die!" Great Sage, of course, had no regard for her whether she was dead or alive. Struggling free, he left the Palm-Leaf Cave in big strides; truly *with no desire for such beauty, he triumphed in gaiety*. Leaping up, he mounted the auspicious cloud to rise to the tall summit where he spat out the fan at once to test its magic. Using his left thumb to press on the seventh red thread attached to the fan's handle, he recited: "*Hui-xu-he-xi-xi-chui-hu*."

Immediately it grew to twelve feet long. When he examined it carefully in his hand, he found that it was indeed quite different from the one before. The whole fan was shrouded by auspicious light and hallowed airs, and it was covered by thirty-six strands of red threads, plaited warp and weft. Pilgrim however, had only acquired the magic of enlarging it, and he had not thought of asking Demoness for the oral formula to make it small again. After fussing with the fan for some time without being able to alter its size at all, he had no choice but to carry it on his shoulder and find his way back. The Bull Demon King finally ended the banquet with those various spirits at the bottom of the Green Wave Lagoon. When he walked out of the door, he discovered that the water-repellent golden-eyed beast had disappeared. Calling the spirits together, the old dragon king asked, "Who stole the golden-eyed beast of Sire Bull?" The spirits all knelt down and said, "No one would dare steal the beast. After all, all of us were presenting juices and serving the trays before the banquet while others recited and made poems. There's no one out in front."

"No member of this family," said the old dragon, "would ever dare do such a thing, I know. But did any stranger come in?" "Shortly after we took our seats," said one of the dragon sons, "there was a crab spirit who got in here. He was a stranger, all right."

On hearing this, the Bull King at once realised what had happened. "No need to talk anymore," he said. "At the time when the invitation of my worthy friend arrived, I was just doing battle with one Sun Wukong who was accompanying the Tang Monk to seek scriptures. When they could not pass the Mountain of Flames, Sun came to ask me for the palm-leaf fan. I refused and we fought to a draw. Then I left him to attend your great banquet but that ape has extraordinary intelligence and vast abilities. He must have taken the form of the crab spirit to spy on us, steal the beast, and then go off to my wife's place to try to wangle that palm-leaf fan." When they heard this, all those spirits shook with fear. "Is this the Sun Wukong who caused great disturbance in the celestial palace?" they asked. The Bull King said, "The very same. All of you'd take care to avoid offending him on the road to the West."

"In that case," said the old dragon, "what will you do about your beast of burden, Great King?" "Don't worry," said the Bull King, laughing. "Please go away now. Let me chase him down."

He opened up a path in the water and leaped out of the lagoon. Mounting a yellow cloud, he soon arrived at the Palm-Leaf Cave in the Jade Cloud Mountain where he heard Demoness wailing loudly, beating her breasts and stamping her feet. He pushed open the door and saw the water-repellent golden-eyed beast tied up inside. "Madam," shouted the Bull King, "where has Sun Wukong gone to?" When the maids saw the Bull Demon, they all went to their knees to say, "Sire, have you returned?" Catching hold of the Bull King, Demoness began to ram him with her head as she screamed: "You wretched reprobate! How could you be so careless and allow that ape to steal your golden-eyed beast, change into your appearance, and deceive me here?" Gritting his teeth, the Bull King said, "Where did that ape go?" Demoness pounded her own chest some more and screamed again. "After he wangled our treasure, that miserable ape changed back into his original form and left. Oh, I'm so mad I'd die!"

"Madam," said the Bull King, "please take care of yourself and don't be distressed. Let me catch up with the ape and get back our treasure. I'll skin him, break his bones, and gouge out his heart – just to give you satisfaction!" Then he bellowed, "Bring me my weapon!" One of the maids said, "But your weapon isn't here."

"Then bring me the weapons of your mistress," said the Bull King. The maids at once took out the 2 blue-bladed treasure swords. Taking off his duck-green silk jacket that he wore to the banquet, the Bull King tightened the belt around his undershirt before he took up the swords with both hands and walked out of the Palm-Leaf Cave to give chase toward the Mountain of Flames. So it was that *the ungrateful man had the silly wife deceived; the fiery demon now approached the disciple*.

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Bullseye 8 Rules assists in defeating the demon king; Pilgrim Sun baits for the third time the palm-leaf fan

Bull Demon King caught up with the Great Sage Sun. When he saw that the Great Sage was carrying the palm-leaf fan on his shoulder and walking merrily along, he was greatly shaken. "So this monkey," said the Demon King to himself, "has succeeded in swindling even the method of operating the fan! If I ask him for it face to face, he will certainly refuse me. Moreover, if he fans at me once, he will send me one hundred and eight thousand miles away. Wouldn't that be to his liking? I've heard that the Tang Monk on his journey is also accompanied by a bull spirit and a Flowing-Sand spirit, both of whom I met in previous years when they were fiends. Let me change into the appearance of that bull spirit to deceive the monkey instead. I suppose he's so pleased with his own success that he must have thrown caution to the winds."

Dear Demon King! He, too, was capable of undergoing seventy-two types of transformation, and his martial skill was about the same as that of the Great Sage, albeit his body was huskier, less agile, and not as nimble. Putting away his treasure swords, he recited a spell and with one shake of his body, changed into the exact appearance of 8 Rules. He sneaked up to the road in front and then walked back facing the Great Sage, calling out: "Elder Brother, I'm here."

Great Sage was indeed quite pleased with himself! As the ancients said, *the cat triumphant purrs like a tiger*. He was thinking only of his own prowess and hardly paid attention to the design of this person drawing near. When he saw a figure resembling 8 Rules, he at once spoke up: "Brother where're you going?" "When Master saw that you didn't return after such a long time," replied the Bull Demon King working his ploy, "he's afraid that the Bull Demon King's too powerful for you to overcome and it'd be difficult for you to get his treasure. He therefore asked me to come to meet you."

"Don't bother," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "I've made it."

"How did you make it?" asked the Bull King.

Pilgrim said, "That old bull tangled with me for over a hundred rounds and we fought to a draw. Then he left me to drink with a bunch of female dragons and dragon spirits at the bottom of the Green Wave Lagoon in the Scattered-Rocks Mountain. I followed him secretly by changing into the form of a crab: I stole the water-repellent golden-eyed beast on which he was riding and then changed into the form of the old bull to go deceive that Demoness in the Palm-Leaf Cave. That woman and old monkey became a bogus couple for a while, during which time I managed to wangle the treasure from her."

"You've been sorely taxed, Elder Brother," said the Bull King, "and you're working too hard. Let me carry the fan for you." As the Great Sage Sun had no concern to distinguish between the true and the false, he handed over the fan immediately. That Bull-King of course knew how to make the fan grow big or small. After he took it in his hands, he recited some kind of a spell and it at once became as tiny as an almond leaf. Changing back into his true form, he shouted, "Wretched ape! Can you recognise me?"

On seeing him, Pilgrim sighed, "It's my fault this time!" then he stamped his feet and bellowed, "Damn! I've been shooting wild geese for years but now a tiny goose's pecked me blind!" He became so enraged that he whipped out his iron rod and slammed it down hard on the Bull King's head. Stepping aside, the Demon King at once used the fan on him. He did not know however, that when the Great Sage changed previously into a tiny mole cricket to enter the stomach of Demoness, he still had in his mouth that Wind-Arresting Elixir that he swallowed unwittingly. All his viscera had become firm; his skin and bones were wholly fortified. No matter how hard the Bull King fanned at him, he could not be moved. Horrified, the Bull King tossed the treasure into his own mouth so that he could wield the swords with both of his hands to slash at his opponent. It was some battle that the 2 of them waged in mid-air: *the Great Sage Sun Equal to Heaven – the world-wrecker, lawless Bull King – because of the palm-leaf fan, they met, each flaunting his might. The careless Great Sage had people deceived; the audacious Bull King did swindle the fan. For this 1, the golden-hooped rod uplifted could no mercy show, for that 1, the double blue-blades had both power and skill. The Great Sage exerting his vigour belched coloured fog; the Bull King letting loose violence spat out white rays. A test of strength by 2 dogged foes; gritting their teeth, they loudly huffed and puffed. Spraying dirt and dust made dim Heaven and Earth; flying rocks and sand awed both ghosts and gods. This 1 said, "You dare be so foolish as to trick me back?"*

*That 1 said, "Would my wife permit you to checkmate her?" their words grew rough; tempers flared. That 1 said, "You cheat someone's wife, and you deserve to die! You'll be found guilty when I file my charge!" The sly Equal to Heaven Sage – the ferocious King Powerful – they wished only to kill and no discussion allowed. The rod struck, the swords came, both working hard. A little slackness will make you see Yama King!*

The Tang Monk was sitting by the road racked by heat, thirst, and anxiety. He said to the local spirit of the Mountain of Flames, "May I inquire of the honourable deity, how powerful's that Bull-Demon King?"

"That Bull-King's," replied the local spirit, "vast, boundless magic powers. He's in fact the real match of the Great Sage Sun."

"Wukong's usually quite able when it comes to travelling," said Tripitaka. "A couple of thousand miles hardly requires very much time for him to be back. How's it that he's gone for a whole day today? He must be fighting with the Bull-King." Then he called out: "Aware of Ability, Awakened to Purity that of you'd like to go meet your elder brother? If you happen to see him fighting our adversary, you can lend him assistance so that all of you can acquire the fan to relieve my distress. Once we get across this mountain, we can be on our way again."

"It's getting late," said 8 Rules. "I'd like to go meet him but I don't know my way to the Hoard-Thunder Mountain."

"This humble deity knows the way," said the local spirit. "Let's ask the Curtain-Raising Captain to keep your master company. I'll go with you."

Highly pleased, Tripitaka said, "Thank you for taking the trouble. I'll express my gratitude once more when merit's achieved."

Rousing himself, 8 Rules tightened his black silk shirt and put the rake on his shoulder before rising with the local spirit on cloud and fog to head for the east. As they proceeded, they suddenly heard terrific shouts and the howling of wind. When he stopped his cloud to look, 8 Rules discovered that Pilgrim Sun was just doing battle with the Bull King. "Go forward, Heavenly Reeds," said the local spirit. "What're you waiting for?"

Firmly gripping his muckrake, Idiot shouted, "Elder Brother, I'm here!"

"Coolie," said Pilgrim spitefully, "how you've upset my great enterprise!"

"Master told me to come meet you," said 8 Rules, "but since I didn't know the way, I'd to discuss the matter before the local spirit agreed to lead me here. I know I'm late but what do you mean by upsetting your great enterprise?"

"I'm not blaming you for your tardiness," said Pilgrim. "It's this wretched bull who is most audacious! I got hold of the fan from Demoness but this fellow changed into your appearance, saying that he came here to meet me. I was so pleased at that moment that I handed over the fan to him. He then changed back to his true form and strove with old monkey at this place. That's what I meant by upsetting my great enterprise."

Infuriated by what he heard, Idiot lifted high his muckrake and screamed. "You bloody plague! How dare you change into the form of your ancestor, deceive my elder brother, and cause enmity to rise among us brothers?" Look at him! He charged into the fray and showered blows madly on the Bull King with his rake. The Bull King, after all, had fought with Pilgrim for nearly one whole day; when he saw how savagely 8 Rules was attacking him with his rake, he could no longer stand his ground and retreated in defeat. His way was barred however, by the local spirit leading a host of ghost soldiers. "King Powerful," said the local spirit, "you'd better stop! There is no god who would not protect the Tang Monk on his journey to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven, no Heaven who would not grant him his blessing. This enterprise is known throughout the Three Regions; it has the support of all ten quarters. Quickly use your fan to extinguish the flames so that he may cross the mountain unharmed and unhindered. Otherwise, Heaven will find you guilty and you'll certainly be executed."

"Local spirit," said the Bull King, "you're completely unreasonable! That wretched ape robbed me of my son, insulted my concubine, and deceived my wife. These were his misdeeds time and again. I hate him so much I wish I'd swallow him whole and reduce him to dung to feed the dogs! How could I give him my treasure?"

Hardly had he finished speaking when 8 Rules caught up with him, screaming, "You bezoar-dick bull! Take out the fan quickly and I'll spare your life!" The Bull King had no choice but to turn and fight 8 Rules again with the treasure swords while the Great Sage Sun raised his rod to help his companion. This was again some battle! *A spirit-bull, a fiend-bull, and an ape who stole to Heaven to gain the Way. As always Chan nature knows smelting and strife for earth must be used to fuse the primal cause. The rake's nine prongs are both pointed and sharp; the treasure swords' 2 blades are quick and smooth. The iron rod in use is determination's staff; 'Earth god assists to make elixir-head. 3 parties together thus feud and strive, each showing his talents to try to win. Seize the bull to plough and gold coins will grow; recall bull to stove, and wood breath's retrieved. With absent mind, how'd one practice Dao?*

*To make spirit guard home's to bind the ape. They brawl and growl in bitter quest: 3 kinds of weapon thus crackle and clang. The rake rakes, the swords cut with wicked aim and good cause rises the gold-hooped rod. They fight till stars lose their brightness and the moon its light till the sky's full of cold fog dense and dark.* Plunging into the battle with fresh courage, the Demon King fought as he moved along. They strove for a whole night but no decision could be reached. By morning, they had arrived at the entrance of the Cloud-Touching Cave of the Hoard-Thunder Mountain. The deafening din created by the three fighters, the local spirit, and the band of ghost soldiers soon alerted the Princess Jade Countenance who asked the maids to see who was making all the racket. The little fiends came back to report: "It's the sire of our family fighting with the fellow who came here yesterday, the one who had a thunder-god beak. Joining the battle are also a monk with long horn and huge ears and the local spirit of the Mountain of Flames with his followers."

When she heard this, Princess Jade Countenance at once summoned the captains, young and old, of the external guards and ordered them to give armed assistance to her husband. The various soldiers, tall and short, that they managed to call up numbered over a hundred, all of them eager to show off their vigour. Gripping lances and waving rods, they swarmed out of the door, shouting, "Sire Great King, by the order of Madam, we've come to assist you." Highly pleased, the Bull King said, "Welcome! Welcome!" The fiends rushed forward to attack. Taken completely by surprise, 8 Rules could not fend off so many opponents and he fled in defeat, his rake trailing behind him. The Great Sage too mounted his cloud somersault to leap free of the encirclement, and the various ghost soldiers immediately scattered. Having thus achieved his victory, the old bull gathered back the various fiends to return to the cave and to shut the door tightly. Pilgrim after getting away, said to 8 Rules and the local spirit, "This fellow's very tough! Since about the hour of *shen*<sup>2</sup> yesterday, he fought with old monkey until nightfall and we'd not reach a decision. Then the two of you arrived to relieve me. But after we went through the bitter struggle of half a day and one whole night, he still didn't seem to tire very much. And the band of little fiends who came out just now also appeared to be quite tough. Now that he's shut his door tightly and refused to come out, what'll we do?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you left Master yesterday in the morning. How was it that you didn't start fighting with him until sometime in the afternoon? Where were you during those few hours in between?"

Pilgrim said, "Since I left you people, I was on this mountain in an instant. I ran into a young woman whom I saluted, and she turned out to be the Princess Jade Countenance, his beloved concubine. I gave her a scare with my iron rod, and she ran into the cave to bring out the Bull King who harangued old monkey for some time before we began to fight. After about two hours, someone came to invite him to a banquet. I followed him to the Green Wave Lagoon at the Scattered-Rocks Mountain where I spied on him and his hosts by changing into a crab. I then succeeded in stealing his water-repellent golden-eyed beast and took on the appearance of the Bull King. Returning to the Palm-Leaf Cave on the Jade Cloud Mountain, I fooled Demoness and wangled the fan from her. After leaving her door, I tried to work the magic: the fan was enlarged all right but I forgot to ask her for the formula to make it small again. As I journeyed back carrying the fan on my shoulder, the Bull King met me, having assumed your features, and wangled the fan back. That's what happened during all that time."

8 Rules said, "It's like what the proverb says, *a bean-curd boat capsized in the ocean*<sup>3</sup> – *in liquid they come, in water they go!* If it's so difficult to get his fan, how can we help Master cross this mountain? Let's go back, find another way, and scat!"

"Please don't be anxious, Great Sage," said the local spirit, "and you'd not slacken, Heavenly Reeds. When you mention finding another way, you're bound to fall into heterodoxy, and you're no longer someone concerned with the proper method of cultivation. As the ancients said where can one walk but on the main road? How can you possibly think of finding another way? Remember your master, now sitting with bulging eyes by the road and waiting for you to succeed!"

Growing vehement, Pilgrim said, "Exactly! Exactly! Don't talk nonsense, Idiot! What the local spirit said is quite right. With that demon we're just about to *wage a contest and try our gifts. Let me exploit my vast transforming powers. Since coming west I've never met a true foe for Bull King in fact was from Mind Monkey changed. Now's the best time for us to meet the source. We must fight to borrow the treasure fan. With pure and cool to snuff the flames, the stubborn void smashed, we'll see God's face. Merit fulfilled we'll rise to ultimate bliss: we'll all then attend God's Birthday Feast!*"

Greatly inspired by these words he heard, 8 Rules exerted himself even more and replied earnestly: "Yes! Yes! Yes! Go! Go! Go! Who cares if the Bull King says yes or no! Wood's born at Bull, *'the cow's its proper mate who'll lead back the Bull to return to earth. Monkey's the metal born under Shen: peaceful and docile, how harmonious! Use the palm-leaf as water's sign. When flames are extinct, Completion's attained. 'In hard work we persist both night and day and rush, merit done, to Ullambana Feast.* Leading the local spirit and the ghost soldiers, the two of them rushed forward and with their muckrake and iron rod, smashed to pieces the front door of the Cloud-Touching Cave. The captain of the external guards was so terrified that he dashed inside to make his report, trembling all over: "Great King, Sun Wukong has led a crowd to break down our front door!"

The Bull King was just telling the Princess Jade Countenance all that had taken place and how deeply he hated Pilgrim. When he heard that his front door had been broken down, he became enraged. Putting on his armour hurriedly, he took up the iron rod and came out. "Wretched ape!" he expostulated as he emerged. "How big do you think you're, that you let loose such violence here and break down my door?" 8 Rules rushed forward and roared, "You old carcass! What sort of a person are you that you dare measure someone else? Don't run away! Watch my rake!"

"An over-gorged coolie like you," shouted the Bull King, "isn't that impressive! Tell that monkey to come up here quickly!"

"You stupid grass-eater!" said Pilgrim. "Yesterday, I was still talking to you as a bond-brother but today you're my enemy. Take care to taste my rod!"

Boldly the Bull King met the 2 of them and the conflict this time was even fiercer than the last 1. 3 valiant persons, all tangled together. *What a battle! Muckrake and rod exert their godly might. They lead ghost soldiers the old bull to fight who displays alone his violent trait and his magic powers vast as Heaven. 1 uses his rake to rake; 1 uses his rod to strike; the heroic iron's more uncanny still. 3 kinds of weapon make clangorous sounds: they block, parry, and will yield to none. He claims he's the first; on top. Ghost soldiers, looking on, can't separate wood and earth feuding and darting up and down. These 2 say, 'Why don't you lend us the palm-leaf fan?'*

*That one says, 'How dare you be so bold as to trick my wife? I've yet to avenge my hunted mistress and my son when you alarm us some more by breaking our door.'*

*This one says, 'You just watch out for my compliant rod. One tiny brush and it will tear your skin!'*

*That one says, 'Do try to dodge the rake's sharp teeth! One wound will make nine bloody holes!'*

*Undaunted the Bull Demon lets loose his power; his iron rod held high, he waits for his chance. They churn up rain and cloud, going back and forth. They belch out wind and fog and do as they please. For this bitter struggle they risk their lives. They, full of hate with each other strive. The stylised limbs go up and down; they cover the front, the back without let up. 2 brothers together now strain and toil; 1 man with one rod performs all alone. From dawn till late morning they fight and fight; at last the Bull Demon will leave with his hands tied.* With no thought for life or death, the three of them again fought for over 100 rounds when 8 Rules, his idiotic nature aroused and strengthened by the magic power of Pilgrim began to attack madly with his rake. No longer able to ward off the blows, the Bull King fled in defeat and headed straight for the cave's entrance. Leading the ghost soldiers to bar the way, the local spirit shouted, "King Powerful where are you fleeing to? We're here!" Unable to enter the cave, the old bull turned swiftly and saw 8 Rules and Pilgrim rushing toward him. He became so flustered that he abandoned his armour and his iron rod; with one shake of his body, he changed into a swan and flew into the air. When Pilgrim saw it, he chuckled and said, "Eight Rules, the old bull's gone!" That Idiot was completely ignorant of the matter, and the local spirit did not perceive either what had happened. All of them were staring this way and that, madly searching before and behind the Hoard-Thunder Mountain. "Isn't he up there flying in the air?" said Pilgrim as he pointed with his finger.

"That's a swan," said 8 Rules. "A transformation of the old bull," said Pilgrim.

"In that case," said the local spirit, "what'll we do?"

"Fight your way in, the two of you," said Pilgrim, "and exterminate all those fiends. In short, we'll break up his lair and cut off his retreat. Let old monkey go and wage a contest of transformation with him."

8 Rules and the local spirit followed his instruction and we'll leave them for the moment. Putting away his golden-hooped rod, the Great Sage shook his body and changed into a Manchurian vulture that spread its wings and darted up to a hole in the clouds. It then hurtled down and dropped onto the swan, seeking to seize its neck and peck at the eyes. Knowing also that this was a transformation of Pilgrim Sun, the Bull King hurriedly flapped his wings and changed himself into a yellow eagle to attack the vulture. At once Pilgrim changed himself into a black phoenix, the special foe of the yellow eagle. Recognising him, the Bull King changed next into a white crane which, after a long cry, flew toward the south. Pilgrim stood still, and shaking his feathers, changed into a scarlet phoenix that uttered a resounding call. Since the phoenix was the ruler of all the birds and fowl, the white crane dared not touch him. Spreading wide his wings, he dived instead down the cliff and changed with one shake of the body into a musk deer, grazing rather timorously before the slope. Recognising him, Pilgrim flew down also and changed into a hungry tiger which with wagging tail and flying paws, went after the deer for food. Greatly flustered, the demon king then changed into a huge spotted leopard to attack the tiger. When Pilgrim saw him, he faced the wind and with one shake of his head, changed into a golden-eyed Asian lion with a voice like thunder and a head of bronze that pounced on the huge leopard. Growing even more anxious, the Bull King changed into a large bear that extended his paws to try to seize the lion. Rolling on the ground, Pilgrim at once turned himself into a scabby elephant with a trunk like a python and tusks like bamboo shoots. Whipping up his trunk, he tried to catch hold of the bear. With a loud guffaw, the Bull King then revealed his original form of a gigantic white bull with a head like a rugged mountain and eyes like bolts of lightning. The 2 horns were like two iron pagodas, and his teeth were like rows of sharp daggers. From head to toe, he measured more than 10000 feet while his height from hoof to neck was about 800. "Wretched ape!" he roared at Pilgrim. "What'll you do with me now?"

Pilgrim also changed back to his true form; yanking out his golden-hooped rod, he bent his back and then straightened out, crying, "Grow!" At once he grew to a height of 100000 feet with a head like Mount Tai, eyes like the sun and the moon, a mouth like a bloody pond, and teeth like doors. Lifting high his iron rod, he brought it down on the bull's head and it was met by a pair of flinty horns. This battle truly rocked the ridges and the mountains, alarmed both Heaven and Earth. A testimonial poem says:

*Dao's 1 foot though the demon's 10000 feet that clever-mind Monkey must toil to beat.*

*If 1 wants the mountain flameless to be, the treasure-fan must bring cold purity.*

*Yellow Dame's resolved the elder to uphold; to clear the fiends Wood-Mum makes bold.*

*5 Phases peaceful, to right fruit return and ascending West, dirt and demons spurn.*

Releasing their vast magic powers, the 2 of them battled in mid-mountain and it soon alerted all those deities inhabiting the empty void: the Golden-Headed Guardian, the 6 Gods of Darkness and the 6 Gods of Light, and the 18 Guardians of Monasteries all came to surround the Demon King who was not the least daunted. Look at him! *He headed east and west with 2 erect and gleaming iron horns charging back and forth; he bunted north, south, his dark, hairy hard tendinous tail whipping left and right.* The Great Sage Sun met him head-on while the various deities attacked him from all sides. Exasperated, the Bull King rolled on the ground and changed back into his original form to flee to the Palm-Leaf Cave. Changing back to his normal size, Pilgrim also gave chase from behind with the deities. Dashing inside the cave, the Demon King shut the door and refused to come out while the gods had the Jade Cloud Mountain tightly surrounded. As they were about to charge the door, they heard the noisy arrival of 8 Rules, the local spirit, and his band of ghost soldiers. When Pilgrim saw them, he asked, "What happened at the Cloud-Touching Cave?"

"The mistress of that old bull," replied 8 Rules, chuckling, "was killed by one blow of my rake. When I stripped her, she turned out to be a white-faced fox. The rest of the fiends were all donkeys, asses, cows, stallions, badgers, foxes, musk deer, goats, tigers, antelopes, and the like – they have all been wiped out. We set fire also to his cave-dwelling. The local spirit then told me that he has another household in this mountain, and that's why we've come back here to make a clean sweep of them."

"You've achieved great merit, Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim. "Congratulations! Old monkey has waged in vain a contest of transformation with him, for I've not yet achieved a victory. He finally changed into the biggest possible white bull, and I therefore assumed the appearance that imitated Heaven and Earth. As I clashed with him, the various deities were kind enough to descend on us and have him completely surrounded. He then changed back into his original form and fled inside the cave."

"Is this that Palm-Leaf Cave?" asked 8 Rules. Pilgrim said, "Indeed it is. This is where Demoness lives."

"In that case," said 8 Rules, growing more vehement, "why don't we fight our way in, attack him, and demand from him the fan? Why should we let him wait and get wiser, or let him enjoy the company of his wife?"

Dear Idiot! Rousing his strength, he lifted high his rake and brought it down on the door; with a loud crash, both the door and one side of the ledge collapsed. One of the maids fled into the cave to report, "Sire! Someone has wrecked our front door!" The Bull King had just dashed inside; still panting, he was telling Demoness about how he took the fan from Pilgrim and then waged the contest

with him. When he heard the report, he became enraged. Spitting out the fan, he handed it over to Demoness who, when she received it, began to weep. "Great King," she said, "let's give that monkey the fan so that he'll withdraw his troops."

"Oh Madam," said the Bull King, "the fan's a small thing but my hatred is deep. You sit here while I go to contend with them once more."

Putting on his armour again, the demon took up the 2 treasure swords and walked out. 8 Rules was still using his rake on the door; when the old bull saw him, he hacked away with his swords without another word. 8 Rules retreated a few steps, protecting himself with the upraised rake. After they left the doorway, the Great Sage immediately joined them with his iron rod. Mounting a violent gust of wind, the Bull Demon leaped clear of the cave-dwelling, and they began a fresh skirmish above the Jade Cloud Mountain, encircled by the many gods, the local spirit, and the band of ghost soldiers. *This was again some battle! Clouds conceal the world; mist shrouds the cosmos; dark wind blows sougning, sand and rocks roll; angry breaths rise up and ocean waves churn. Two swords are sharpened again; the whole body's armed once more. There's hatred deep as the sea as anger grows from enmity. Watch the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who, rejects now a friend he has known for years for merit's sake. 8 Rules uses his power to seek the fan; the gods hunt the Bull King to protect the Law. The Bull King's 2 hands will not stop or pause: with vigour they parry both left and right. They fight till the birds fold their wings and cease to fly till fishes stop leaping and submerge their scales, ghosts and gods wail as Heaven and Earth grow faint, tigers and dragons cower as sunlight fades.* Abandoning any regard for his life or limb, the Bull King fought them for over fifty rounds before he weakened and was forced to retreat in defeat. As he fled toward the north, he was met at once by the Diamond Guardian Religion Diffusion of vast magic powers and of the Cliff of Mysterious Demons in the Mountain of 5 Platforms who shouted at him, "Bull Demon where are you going? I've been sent by the Religious Patriarch God to set up cosmic nets here to capture you."

Hardly had he finished speaking when the Great Sage, 8 Rules, and the other deities came rushing toward them, so frightening the demon king that he turned and fled toward the south. He ran right into the Diamond Guardian Victorious Ultimate of immeasurable religion-power and of the Pure-Cool Cave in the Emei Mountain who shouted at him, "I received a god's decree to capture you."

His legs turning weak and his heart growing faint, the Bull King hurriedly tried to head toward the east, when he was met by the Diamond Guardian Great Strength, a Vaisramaṇa ascetic from the Ear-Touching Ridge of the Sumeru Mountain who shouted at him: "Where are you going, old bull? By the secret command of Siddhartha, I'm here to arrest you." Backing off in fear, the Bull King fled toward the west but he was greeted by the Diamond Guardian Ever Abiding, the indestructible honoured king of the Golden Beam Summit at the Kunlun Mountain who shouted at him, "Where is this fellow going? I'm stationed here by the personal order of the aged God in the Great Thunderclap Monastery of the Western Heaven. Who'll let you get away?"

In fear and trembling, the Bull King did not have time even for regret when he saw Religious warriors and celestial generals approaching from all sides with cosmic nets spread so wide that there was virtually no way to escape. In that abject moment, he heard Pilgrim and other pursuers closing in, and he had to mount the clouds to try to flee toward the sky.

Just then, Deity-King Li, the Pagoda-Bearer, and Prince Naṭa led Fish-Bellied Lightning Nature spirit and Celestial General Mighty-Spirit to block his path in mid-air. "Slow down! Slow down!" they cried. "By the decree of the Jade Emperor, we're here to arrest you." In desperation, the Bull King shook his body as before and changed into a huge white bull, wielding his two iron-like horns to try to gore the Deity-King who met him with his scimitar.

Meanwhile, Pilgrim Sun arrived at the scene. "Great Sage," shouted Prince Naṭa, "we've our armour on and we can't salute you properly. Yesterday we dad and son saw Siddhartha who asked us to present a memorial to the Jade Emperor and inform him that the journey of the Tang Monk's been blocked at the Mountain of Flames and it's difficult for the Great Sage Sun to bring the Bull-Demon King to submission. The Jade Emperor therefore issued a decree for my dad king to lead the troops here to lend you assistance."

"But this fellow has considerable magic powers," said Pilgrim. "Now he has changed into such a body. What'll we do?"

"Great Sage, don't worry!" said the prince with a laugh. "Watch me capture him!"

Shouting "Change!", the prince immediately changed into a figure having three heads and six arms. He leaped onto the bull's back and brought his monster-cleaving sword down on the bull's neck: the bull was beheaded at once. Putting away his scimitar, the Deity-King was about to greet Pilgrim when another head emerged from the torso of the bull, his mouth belching black air and his eyes beaming golden rays. Naṭa lifted his sword once more and cut off the bull's head; as soon as it dropped to the ground, another head came out. It went on like this more than ten times. At last, Naṭa took out his fiery wheel and hung it on the Bull's horn. The wheel at once started a great blaze of true mortal fire that burned so fiercely that the bull began to growl and roar madly, shaking his head and wagging his tail. He would have liked to use transformation to escape but the Deity-King Pagoda-Bearer trained his imp-reflecting mirror steadfastly on him so that he could not change out of his original form. As he had no way to flee, he could only cry, "Don't take my life! I'm willing to make submission to Religion."

"If you do pity your own life," said Naṭa, "bring out the fan quickly."

The Bull-King said, "The fan is being kept by my wife."

On hearing this, Naṭa took out his monster-tying rope and draped it around the bull's neck. Then he threaded the rope through his nostrils so that the bull could be pulled with the hand. Pilgrim then collected together the 4 Great Diamond Guardians, the 6 Gods of Darkness and the 6 Gods of Light, the Guardians of Monasteries, the Deity-King Pagoda-Bearer, the Celestial General Mighty-Spirit, 8 Rules, the local spirit, and the ghost soldiers. Surging around the white bull, they all went back to the entrance of the Palm-Leaf Cave. "Madam," called the old bull, "please bring out the fan to save my life."

When Demoness heard the call, she took off her jewels and her coloured clothing. Tying up her hair like a Daoist priestess and putting on a plain coloured robe like a Religious nun, she took up with both hands the twelve-foot long palm-leaf fan to walk out of the door. When she caught sight of the Diamond Guardians, the Deity-King and his son, and the other sages, she hurriedly went to her knees to respect and say, "I beg the Nuns to spare our lives. We're willing to give this fan to Brother-in-law Sun so that he may achieve his merit."

Pilgrim drew near and took up the fan; then all of them mounted the auspicious clouds to return toward the east. Tripitaka and Sand-monk were alternately sitting and standing by the main road as they waited for Pilgrim. They were indeed full of anxiety because he did not return for such a long time. Then, all of a sudden, auspicious clouds filled the sky and hallowed lights flooded the earth, as the various divine officers drifted near. Turning quite apprehensive, the elder said, "Awakened to Purity who're those divine warriors approaching us?"

Recognising the figures he saw, Sand-monk replied, "Master, those are the Four Great Diamond Guardians, the Golden-Headed Guardian, the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of Light, the Guardians of Monasteries, and other deities of the air. The one leading the bull is Third Prince Naṭa, and the one holding the mirror is Deity-King Li, the Pagoda-Bearer. Big Brother is carrying the palm-leaf fan, followed by Second Elder Brother and the local spirit. All the rest happen to be celestial guards." On hearing this, Tripitaka put on his Vairocana hat and changed into his cassock before he led Awakened to Purity to salute the sages saying, "What virtue does this disciple possess that he should cause all you honoured sages to descend to the mortal world?"

"You'd be congratulated, sage monk," said 1 of the 4 Great Diamond Guardians, "for your perfect merit's nearly achieved. We've come to assist you by the decree of God. You must persist in your cultivation with all diligence and not slacken at all." Tripitaka respected repeatedly to receive this instruction. Holding the fan, the Great Sage Sun walked near the mountain and waved the fan once with all his might. Immediately the flames on the mountain subsided and there was only the faintest glow left. He fanned at it a second time and a cool, gentle breeze rustled through the region. He fanned at the mountain a 3<sup>rd</sup> time and as *hazy clouds filled the sky, a fine rain drizzled down*. A testimonial poem says:

*800 miles long, this Mountain of Flames, the light of its fire's worldwide fame.  
Elixir can't ripen with 5 senses scorched; when 3 Passes<sup>8</sup> are burned, the Dao's impure.  
At times the palm-leaf may bring dew and rain; by luck Heaven's hosts lend their godly power.  
Lead the bull to God, let it sin no more: nature's calm when water's joined with fire.*

At this time Tripitaka was liberated from heat and delivered from distress; his mind was purified and will made quiescent. The 4 pilgrims renewed their submission and thanked the Diamond Guardians who returned to their treasure mountains. The 6 gods of Darkness and the 6 gods of Light then rose into the air to provide continual protection while the other deities all scattered. The deity-king and the prince led the bull to return to see God. Only the local spirit remained to watch Demoness who was still standing at attention on one side. "Demoness," said Pilgrim, "how is it that you're not on your way? Why're you still standing here?"

Going to her knees, Demoness said, "I beg the Great Sage to be merciful and give me back my fan."

"You bitch!" shouted 8 Rules. "You don't know when to stop! Isn't it enough that we spare your life? You still want your fan? After we've taken it across the mountain, you think we'll not trade it for a snack? We're not going to give it back to you after we've expended all this energy! Look how the rain drizzles! Why don't you go back!"

"The Great Sage," said Demoness, saluting again, "said originally that he would return the fan to me once the fire was extinguished. I didn't listen to you at first and now it's too late for regret after such a battle. Because of our recalcitrance, an army had to be sent here to toil and fight. I'd however, like to tell you that we've actually attained the way of humanity, though we've not returned to the right fruit. Now that I've witnessed the epiphany of the true body returning to the West, I'll never dare misbehave again. I beg you to give me back my fan so that I may start a new life in self-cultivation."

"Great Sage," said the local spirit, "since this woman knows the means by which the flames can forever be extinguished, you'd ask her for it before you return the fan to her. This humble deity will remain in this region to care for its populace and beg from them some offering for my livelihood. You'll have done us all an act of grace."

"When I spoke to the local people," said Pilgrim, "they told me that when the fan extinguished the fire on this mountain, they'd only harvest the five grains for one year. Then the fire would start again. How'd it be extinguished forever?"

"If you want it extinguished forever," replied Demoness, "you must fan at the mountain forty-nine times. It'll never start again."

When he heard this, Pilgrim indeed took the fan and fanned with all his strength at the summit forty-nine times: a great torrential rain descended on the mountain. It was truly a treasure for the rain came down on only the area where there was fire before; where there was no fire, the sky remained clear. Master and disciples thus stood on the spot where there was no fire and they did not get wet at all. After staying there for the night, they put in order the luggage and the horse the next morning and gave the fan back to Demoness. Pilgrim said to her, "If old monkey didn't do this, I fear that people might say that my words are untrustworthy. You go back to a mountain with your fan now and start no trouble. I spare you because you've already attained a human body." After she received the fan, Demoness recited a spell, and it changed again back into an almond leaf that she placed in her mouth. She saluted to thank the pilgrims and went off somewhere to practice self-cultivation as a recluse. In the end she, too, attained the right fruit and a lasting reputation in the *Threads*. As Demoness and the local spirit thanked them and walked to send them off, Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk were again accompanying Tripitaka to move forward, truly with their bodies pure and cool and with moisture beneath their feet. This is what we mean by Kan and Li *completed, true origin's fused; water and fire balanced, the great Dao is born*.

## PART V THE DREAM 062

### As the Peonies Glow Red, the Qing Fish Breathes Out Its Spell Issuing an Elegy for the Wrongly Killed, the Great Sage Tarries

*The myriad things have ever been one body; each body, too, contains a cosmos. I dare open a clear eye on the world and strive to root anew its hills and streams.*

The Qing Fish confuses and bewitches the Mind-Monkey.<sup>1</sup> 1 sees throughout that the causes of all emotions are floating clouds and phantasms. As the story goes, after the Tang Priest and his three disciples left the Flaming Mountain, days turned into months, until they came again to the time of green spring. The Tang Priest sighed, "We four have travelled day in and day out, never knowing when we'll see Shakyamuni. Wukong,<sup>2</sup> you've been over the road to the West several times, how much farther do we've to go? And how many more monsters will we meet?"

Monkey replied, "Don't worry, Master. If we disciples pool our strength, we needn't fear even a monster as big as heaven."

He had hardly finished speaking when all at once they spied before them a mountain road. Everywhere flowers old and newly fallen covered the ground like a tapestry. There where tall bamboo leaned over the road stood a peony tree: *the famous flowers no sooner bloomed than formed this tapestry; clusters of blossoms press together, competing with beauty strange. Like finely tailored brilliant clouds they face the sun and smile, tenderly holding fragrant dew and bending with the breeze. Clouds love these famed beauties and come to protect them; butterflies cling to their heavenly fragrance and tarry over leaving. Were I to compare their colour with the ladies in the Spring Palace, only Yang Kuei-Fei coquettishly leaning, half-drunk would do.* <sup>3</sup> Monkey said, "Master, those peonies are so red!"

The Tang priest responded, "No they're not."

"Master," said Monkey, "Your eyes must be scorched by the hot spring sun if you insist that peonies so red aren't red. Why not dismount and sit down while I send for the Nun Great King of Medicine to clear up your eyes. Don't force yourself to go on while your vision is blurred. If you take the wrong road, it will be no one else's fault."

The Priest snapped, "Rascal monkey! You're the one who's mixed up. It's backwards to say that my eyes are blurred."

Monkey said, "Master, if your eyes aren't blurred, why you say the peonies aren't red?"

The Priest replied, "I never said the peonies aren't red. I only said that it's not the peonies that are red."

Monkey said, "If it's not the peonies that are red, Master, it must be the sunlight shining on them that makes them so red."



When the Priest heard Monkey suggest sunlight, he decided that his disciple's thinking was even farther off. "Stupid ape!" he scolded. "It's you who's red! You talk about peonies, then about sunlight – you certainly drag in trivialities!"

Monkey said, "You must be joking, Master. All the hair on my body is mottled yellow, my tiger-skin kilt is striped, and my monk's robe is grey. Where do you see red on me?"

The Priest said, "I didn't mean that your body's red. I meant that your heart's red." Then he said, "Wukong, listen to this Verse of mine." From his horse he recited: "*The peonies aren't red; it's the disciple's heart that's red. When all the blossoms have fallen, it's as if they'd not yet bloomed.*"

He finished the Verse and rode on 100 paces.<sup>4</sup> There before them several hundred lasses, each one rosy as a spring bud, suddenly appeared beneath the peony tree. They frolicked, picking flowers, weaving grass mats, carrying baby boys and girls, and showing off their loveliness. When they saw the monks coming from the east, they giggled, covering their mouths with their sleeves. The Priest was troubled. He called to Wukong, "Let's go by way of some other less travelled route. I'm afraid that in this spring meadow so fresh and green these beautiful children will lead us straight into trouble and entanglements."

Monkey said, "Master, I've been meaning to say a few words to you but I'm always afraid of offending you, so I've not dared speak. All your life you've suffered from two great ills. One is using your mind too much, the other is literary Ch'an.<sup>5</sup> What I mean by using your mind too much is that you're always fretting over this and that. Literary Ch'an means reciting poems and discussing principles, bringing up your past to verify the present, and talking about scriptures and verses. Literary Ch'an has nothing to do with our real goal, and using the mind too much actually invites demons. Overcome these ills and you'll be well prepared to go to the West."

The Priest was displeased. Monkey insisted, "You're mistaken, Master. They are homebodies, we're monks. We share one road but we've two kinds of hearts."

Hearing this, the Tang Priest sharply urged his horse forward. But suddenly eight or nine children jumped out from the crowd and surrounded him – a wall of boys and girls. They stared at him, then began to jump up and down, shouting, "This little boy has grown up but he still wears raggedy beggar-boy clothes!"

Being by nature a man who loved tranquility, how could the Priest put up with these children? He tried to talk them nicely into leaving but they would not go. He scolded them, yet still they would not go, and only kept up their taunts, "This boy has grown up but he still wears beggar-boy clothes!"

The Priest could not think of anything to do, so he dismounted, took off his robe, hid it in his bundle, and sat down on the grass. The children would not leave him alone, and taunted again, "Give us this one-coloured raggedy beggar's robe. If you don't, we'll go home and ask our mums to make us patched robes of apple green, dark green, willow green, *pi-i* bird colour,<sup>6</sup> evening-cloud, swallow grey, sauce-brown, sky-blue, peach-pink, jade, lotus stem, lotus-green, silver-green, fish-belly white, ink-wash, pebble-blue, reed-flower green, five-colour weave, lychee, coral, duck's head green, colour of the palindrome weave, and love-weave. Then we'll needn't your robe!"

The Tang Priest closed his eyes and remained silent. Bullseye did not know what was bothering the Master and only wanted to play with the boys and girls. He jokingly called them his adopted children. Monkey watching this became restless and upset. He took his iron cudgel from behind his ear<sup>7</sup> and brandished it, forcing the crowd back. The children, now frightened, ran away, stumbling over one another. But Monkey's temper did not abate. In a flash he overtook them, swung his cudgel, and struck. Those sweet snail-horn tufts and peachy cheeks passed into oblivion, becoming so many butterflies and will-o'-the-wisps. When the crowd of beauties under the peonies saw Monkey beating the children to death, they quickly dropped their flower baskets and ran to the edge of a nearby stream. Picking up slabs of rock, they came forward to meet Monkey. But Monkey did not hesitate; he knocked them dead to the ground with one sweep of his cudgel. It so happened that Monkey, although brave and belligerent, was, nevertheless, compassionate. As he placed the cudgel back behind his ear, tears unconsciously flowed from his eyes, and he said to himself contritely, "Great Heaven! Since I became a Religious, I've controlled my emotions and contained my anger. I've never wrongly killed a single man. Today I struck out in sudden anger and killed boys and girls who weren't even monsters or thieves – old and young, maybe fifty in all. I completely forgot the heavy price for doing wrong."

Monkey took two steps, and was again overcome by fear. He said to himself, "I've been thinking only of hell in the future. I'd completely forgotten the hell that is right in front of me. The day before yesterday I killed a monster, and right away the Master wanted to recite the charm."<sup>8</sup> Once when I killed several thieves, the Master renounced me on the spot. When he sees this pile of corpses today, he'll really be angry. If he recites the charm a hundred times, this noble Great Sage Sun<sup>9</sup> will be one skinned monkey. Will I've any honour left then?"

But after all, Mind-Monkey was intelligent and resourceful. He came up with another idea. He knew our old monk was a man of culture but he was also overly compassionate, and the bones in his ears were soft.<sup>10</sup> To himself he said, "Today I'll write a eulogy for these wrongly killed innocents. I'll put on a crying face and read it as I walk. When the Master sees me crying so, he'll surely be suspicious and say, 'Wukong, what's happened to that old pluck of yours?' I'll say, 'There are monsters on the Western road.' The Master's suspicion will increase. He'll ask, 'Where are these monsters? What are they called?' I'll say, 'They're called "man-beating monsters." If you don't believe me, take a look and you'll see that the crowd of boys and girls have become bloody corpses.' When Master hears how terrible the monsters are, his courage will fail and his heart will leap. Bullseye will say, 'Let's get out of here.' Sandy will say, 'Let's go, fast!' When I see that they're well shaken, I'll comfort them with one word: 'Everything's been taken care of by Kuan-yin. There's not one tile left unbroken in the monster's cave!' Monkey straightaway found a rock to use for an ink-stone and broke a plum branch for a brush. He ground mud into ink and stripped bamboo to make paper. Then he wrote out the eulogy. Gathering up his sleeves like a scholar, he swaggered with long strides and loudly recited:

I, Monkey, first disciple of the Great Religious Master Hsüan-tsang who received from the legitimate Emperor of the Great Tang a hundred-pearled cassock, a five-pearled abbot's staff, and the tide 'Brother of the Emperor,' as the Master of Water-curtain Cave, Great Sage Equal of Heaven, Rebel in the Heavenly Palace, and Eminent Guest in the Underworld, Sun Wukong, do reverently offer as sacrifice clear juice and simple food and write this message to you, spirits of the boys and girls in the spring wind, against whom I bore no grudge and harboured no enmity: Alas! The willows by the gate have turned to gold; orchids in the courtyard are pregnant with jade. Heaven and Earth are unkind; the green-in-years reach no fruition. Oh, why do their waistbands drift among peach blossoms this third month on the River Hsiang? Why do the white crane's clouds twine with the endless mist to the Ninth Heaven? Ah, ye spirits, how can I send you off? I bear a secret sorrow for you. And furthermore where dragons and snakes are coiled around bronze columns, in the great hall busy with her jade lute weeping for the wind and rain, in the tower, crying like a tiger – such was the decorum of the White Girl. Oh, why, when spring clothes are ready and spring grasses green, and when spring days grow longer, are spring lives cut short? Ah, Ye spirits! How can I send you off? I bear a secret sorrow for you. Alas! A hobbyhorse ride of a mile, a firefly bag half-filled – Little Boy Fate had no call for anger. The money for washing has not been given but little bird shoes have flown to the Western Abyss; a pair of pillars, first decked in red, now don white goose-feather robes and play in the Purple Vale. Ah, ye spirits! How can I send you off? I bear a secret sorrow for you. And think of Confucius who, as a lad of seven hid in the bed curtains and chirped like a cricket! And think of Tseng Shen who when only two feet tall offered lichees from under the stairs! Oh why do you no longer speak of such proprieties? Jade is split in the southern field, a lotus shatters on the eastern lake. The jujubes, floating red, are not gathered; the sap that hangs from the *t'ung* tree is not chewed. Ah, Ye spirits! How can I send you off? I bear a secret sorrow for you. Alas! Not to the South or North or West or East can I write lines to bring back your souls. Are you Chang or Ch'ien or Hsü or Chao? How can I tell from these old gravestones? Ah, Ye spirits! How can I send you off? I bear a secret sorrow for you.<sup>11</sup>

By the time Monkey finished reading, he had come to the peony tree. He saw the Master asleep, his head drooped on his chest while Sandy and Bullseye lay sleeping with their heads on a stone. Monkey laughed to himself, "The old monk is usually more vigorous – he's never been so drowsy. My stars are lucky today! I'll not have to suffer from the charm."

Then he picked some grass and flowers, and after rolling them into a ball, stuffed them in Bullseye's ear. He yelled in the other ear, "Wu-neng!<sup>12</sup> Don't have upside-down dreams!"

Bullseye mumbled a reply in his dream, "Master, why are you calling me?"

Monkey realised that in his dream Bullseye mistook him for the Master, so he imitated the Master's voice and said, "Disciple, Nun Kuan-yin passed here and asked me to give you her regards."

With his eyes closed Bullseye mumbled through the grass, "Has the Nun said anything behind my back?"

Monkey said, "Oh my, yes! The Nun just now evaluated me and you three as well. First she said that I'd not become a god and told me not to go to the Western Paradise. She said Wukong will surely become a god, and that he should go on to the Western Paradise alone. Wu-ching<sup>13</sup> can be a monk. She said he should go and cultivate himself in a pure temple along the Western road. After making these three comments, the Nun stared at you and said, 'Wu-neng likes his sleep. He'll never reach the Western Paradise either. Please tell him that I said he should take a loving and faithful wife.'"

Bullseye said, "I don't want the Western Paradise or a lovely wife! I just want half a day in the dark sweet village of sleep."

And he snored like a bull. When Monkey saw that he wouldn't wake up, he laughed and said, "Disciple, I'll go on ahead." Then he went west to beg for food.

## 063

### A New Tang Dynasty Appears on the Western Road; the Glorious Emperor Rests in the Green Jade Palace

From here on, Wukong devises a thousand schemes to fool others but instead only fools himself. Monkey leaped onto his magic cloud and looked east and west for a place to beg for food. Two hours later he had yet to see a single house and was growing impatient. Just as he was about to lower his cloud and return to the old road, he spied a great city surrounded by a moat ten miles off. He hurried in to take a look, and saw that on the city wall flew a green embroidered banner. In golden seal-style characters the banner announced: "Great Tang's New Son-of-Heaven, the Restoration Emperor, Thirty-eighth Successor of T'ai-tsung."<sup>1</sup>

When Monkey spotted the two words "Great Tang," he gave a start and broke out in a cold sweat. He thought, "We've been travelling west; how could we've returned to the east? This can't be real. I wonder what monster is doing evil here." Then he had another thought, "I've heard the earth is round and the sky goes around it. Perhaps we passed the Western Paradise and have come around again. If that's so, we'd not worry – we'll just have to go around once more, and we'll reach the Western Paradise. Maybe this is real after all."

But after reconsideration he rejected that idea, "It's not real. No! If we passed the Western Paradise, why didn't the Compassionate God call out to me? After all, I've seen him several times, and he's not an unfeeling or inhospitable person. This has got to be a hoax."

Then he recalled, "When I was a demon at Water-curtain Cave,<sup>2</sup> I'd a sworn brother who called himself Messenger-in-Blue. He gave me a book entitled *Apocryphal History of the K'un-lun Mountains*. In one place it said, 'There was a kingdom called China that wasn't originally called China. Its people envied the name China and consequently adopted it.' This kingdom must be the place in the West that took the name 'China.' So it is real."

An instant later Monkey blurted out, "False! False! False! False! False! If they were envious of China, they would only have written 'China.' Why did they write 'Great Tang'? What's more, my Master often says that the Great Tang is quite a new empire. How could they already know the name here and change their banner? It can't be real." After a long time he still hadn't made up his mind, so he decided to take a closer look and read the rest of the banner. When he read

*New Son of Heaven, the Restoration Emperor, 38<sup>th</sup> Successor of T'ai-tsung*

He stamped his feet and shouted into the sky, "Nonsense! Nonsense! It hasn't been twenty years since the Master left the realm of the Great Tang. How could a dynasty already have passed several centuries? The Master is only flesh and blood. Even though he's been in and out of the caves of spirits and mortals and visited fairy islands, he still passes his days like any ordinary man. How could there be such a difference? It has to be false."

But he considered again, "You can't tell – if they changed emperors each month, they could go through thirty-eight emperors in less than four years. Maybe it is real."

The fog of doubt had not been dispersed, and all this reasoning was getting him nowhere. So he lowered his cloud and recited an incantation to summon the local deity for information. He repeated it ten times but no deity came. Monkey thought, "Usually when I recite just a little of it, they shield their heads and come running like rats. What's going on today? Well, this is for something urgent, so I'll not punish him. I'll call the celestial officials on duty today. They'll know the answer for sure."

Trying to locate the celestial officials, he shouted toward the sky several hundred times but couldn't find a trace of them. Monkey was furious. In a twinkling he changed into the form in which he had caused an uproar in Heaven,<sup>3</sup> and brandished his cudgel till it was as big around as the mouth of a barrel. He sprang into the air, jumping and whirling wildly. He carried on for a long while but not so much as a lowly deity answered him. Monkey became even angrier. He rushed headlong to the Palace of Magic Mists to see the Jade Emperor and demand an explanation from him. But when he got there he found the gates of Heaven tightly closed. Monkey yelled, "Open the door! Open the door!"

Someone inside replied, "Listen to this impetuous slave, will you? Someone has stolen our Palace of Magic Mists. There's no Heaven to be entered."

He heard someone else laugh and say, "Didn't you know our Palace was stolen, big brother? Five centuries ago there was a Stable Master Sun<sup>4</sup> who caused an uproar in Heaven. He didn't manage to steal the Palace of Magic Mists but he carried a grudge and formed a gang, and while pretending he was going to get scriptures, he made friends with all the monsters on the Western road. Then one day he summoned those monsters and used several ingenious devices to steal the Palace. That's what's called in military strategy 'Using others to attack others – an infallible plan.' That ape is really a schemer! He's quite something!"

When Monkey heard this, he was both amused and annoyed. But being a stubborn and impatient fellow, how could he swallow these false charges? He beat on the gate again with his fists and kicked it, shouting "Open the door!"

The voice inside spoke again. "If you really want to open the gates of Heaven, wait five thousand and forty-six years until the new Palace of Magic Mists is completed. Then we'll open the gates to receive you, honoured guest. How's that?"

Monkey had hoped to see the Jade Emperor and get a divinely worded scroll in purple characters that would state clearly whether the Great Tang he had seen was true or false. Instead he had been greatly humiliated. He could do nothing but lower his cloud and return to the domain of the Great Tang, saying, "I'll just go on in and see what happens." Thereupon he forgot his annoyance and walked through the city gate. The guard at the gate said, "The new Emperor's ordered that anyone who speaks or dresses strangely is to be seized and killed. You'd watch out for yourself, little monk with no home or family." Monkey saluted with his clasped hands and said "Your words, sir, are most considerate." He hurried through the gate, then changed himself into a black and white butterfly and flew along like the exercise of a beautiful girl or the notes of a lute. Soon he reached the base of a colourful tower. He fluttered through its jade gate and came to rest in a hall. The jade hinges of the many doors were wound around with mist; the green chambers were wrapped in clouds. Even fairies never see such sights – a mortal's cave hardly compares. *The heavens revolve, the golden breath unites; the stars move until the Dipper's handle becomes level. A cloud forms in the Kingfisher Palace; the sun shines bright in Phoenix City.* Monkey looked and looked. He noticed on the door-lintel of the hall three large characters which read:

Green Jade Palace

Beside this was inscribed a line of small characters: "This palace was built on an auspicious day in the second month of the first year of the Romantic Emperor of the New Tang." The hall was silent but on one wall were two lines of calligraphy: "When the Tang dynasty had held the mandate less than fifty years, that great country was reduced to the size of a peck. Fifty years after the Tang received the mandate, the mountains and streams flew about, the stars and the moon left their courses. But the new emperor has held the mandate for a billion years. People everywhere recite the odes written for King Hsüan of Chou.<sup>5</sup> I, the minor official Chang Ch'iu, reverently offer praise."

When Monkey read this, he laughed to himself and said: "With insignificant officials like this at court, how could the emperor help but be romantic?"

At that moment an imperial concubine entered carrying a green bamboo broom. She chuckled to herself, "Oh-ho! The emperor is asleep, the prime minister is, too. This Green Jade Palace is now a "Sleeping Mortal Pavilion." Last night our Romantic Emperor warmed the room of Lady Qing-kuo.<sup>6</sup> He ordered juice taken to Flying Kingfisher Palace for a merry night of drinking. Early in the evening he brought out a Kao-Tang mirror<sup>7</sup> and told Lady Qing-Kuo to stand on his left and Lady Hsü to stand on his right. As they stood three abreast gazing into the mirror, the emperor said, 'You two ladies are lovely!'

Lady Qing-kuo said, 'Your Majesty is handsome.'

The emperor turned his head to ask the opinion of us concubines, and all three hundred of us who are intimate with him replied together, 'Your Majesty is indeed the world's finest.'

"The emperor was delighted. He narrowed his eyes and tossed off a great horn of juice. When he was half-drunk he got up to look at the moon, then opened his mouth and laughed. Pointing at Ch'ang O<sup>8</sup> in the moon, he said, 'That's my Lady Hsu.' Lady Hsü pointed at the stars of the Spinning Lady and the Cowherd and said, 'There're Your Majesty and Lady Qing-kuo. Although tonight is only the fifth of the third month, you've in advance the evening of the seventh month.'<sup>9</sup> The emperor was greatly pleased and again drank his great horn empty. A drunken emperor – face flushed, head nodding, legs staggering, tongue thick; oblivious to the fact that three sevens are twenty-one and two sevens are fourteen – toppled across Lady Hsü's body. Lady Qing-kuo quickly sat down and folded herself into a snowflake mat of flesh to pillow the emperor's heels. At Lady Hsü's side sat a young maid of rather good taste who straightaway plucked a fragrant sea-tree flower. Giggling, she walked behind Lady Hsü and lightly placed it on the emperor's head, making him a drunken Flower Emperor. Such a happy time! It was really a fairy island on earth. Still, when you think of it, past generations had many emperors, and not a few romantic ones. Today their palaces are gone, the lovely ladies are gone, the emperors, all gone. There's really no need to mention Ch'in and Han and the Six Dynasties – even our late emperor in his middle age loved to seek pleasure. He built Pearl-rain Tower – so elegant! It was trellised with white jade, and on all four sides carved green ornaments hung from the windows. On the north stood a round frost-cave gate where you'd watch the sun rise and set in the sea. The stairs below were made of red sandalwood edged with gold. Painted lotus-faces, powdered plum-petal skin, cicada-wing blouses and unicorn belts, flutes of Shu and strings of Wu<sup>10</sup> – no one saw all this without envy or heard all this without being moved. Yesterday the empress told me to go and sweep the grounds of the eastern flower garden. I looked over the short wall to see Pearl-rain Tower, and at first I saw only desolate grass. I looked again. There were clouds and mist, and what had been three thousand interlocking tiles were a million fragments. Beams carved with whirling dragons and timbers carved with flying insects stood like broken trellises. But there was something still more absurd. The sun was only halfway up the sky but several will-o'-the-wisps came from the well by the pines. When I looked closely, there wasn't a single reciting-boy or dancing-girl in sight, only two or three cuckoos calling over and over – one high note and one low note in the spring rain. When you see this sort of thing, you realise that emperor and commoner all return to nothing; imperial concubine and village girl alike become dust. Last year on the fifteenth of the first month, the Taoist recited Lo spoke a bit of wisdom. He said, 'Our Romantic Emperor enjoys seeing people in paintings and loves the scenery in pictures.' So he presented a painting called 'A Portrait of Mt. Li.' The emperor asked, 'Is Mt. Li still in existence?' The Taoist said, 'Mt. Li has had a short life of only millennia years.' The emperor laughed and said, 'Two v is enough.' The Taoist said, 'I only regret that it has not been two millennia in a row. The Mt. Li of earth and wood lasted only two centuries; people talked about it for four centuries; it's been depicted in writings, calligraphic works, and paintings for five centuries, and recorded in history for nine centuries. Adding up these fragments you get two millennia.' That day I was in attendance, standing right in front of the Taoist. I heard every sentence clearly. That was over a year ago, and just the day before yesterday, I visited a learned imperial concubine and spoke to her of this. She told me that the *Portrait of Mount Li* really showed the grave of the First August Emperor of Ch'in who once used the Mountain-removing Bell."<sup>11</sup>

The girl swept and talked and talked and swept. When Monkey heard the words, *Mountain-removing Bell*, he thought, *how can a mountain be removed? ... Why, if I'd that bell, whenever I came to a high mountain where monsters lived, I'd just remove it in advance and save myself trouble.* He was about to change himself into a court attendant and go ask the concubine more about the magical bell when suddenly he heard loud strains of flute and drum poems coming from the main palace.

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Hsüan-Tsang's To Be Commissioned and Given a Peach Flower Battle-Axe; the Mind-Monkey's Startled by the Axes of Sky Gougers

When Monkey heard the poems he flew right out through Tiger Gate. After passing many towers and courtyards, he finally came to a carved green portico where the emperor sat surrounded by numerous officials. As he drew near, he saw the emperor blanch and say to his officials: "Yesterday I was reading the *Precious Instructions of the August Tang*. One section related, 'The Tang priest Ch'en Hsüan-tsang impersonated a monk and deluded our royal ancestor. His disciples were all Water-curtain Cave and Stony Brook' types. Abbot's staff and begging bowl became weapons like the wooden rake<sup>2</sup> and metal cudgel. Forty years later, Hsüan-tsang led his disciples on an invasion of our territory. He was indeed a great enemy.' Another section related that 'five centuries ago Sun Wukong rebelled against Heaven. He wanted to drag the Jade Emperor down from his throne and deposit him at the bottom of the stairs. However, the Mandate of Heaven had not expired, and God put down the rebellion. If Sun Wukong could rebel against Heaven, how much more could he rebel against mortals? And yet the Tang Priest accepted him as his number-one disciple. Why? He wanted to use his journey to the West to establish hegemony over the Southeast. He relied on the awesomeness of the ape and his dragon-horse<sup>3</sup> to secure his position as a shark among fish.' When I read those words, I became frightened. But if I order Regional Commander Chao Ch'eng to go west to decapitate this priest and bring back his head, then spare his disciples and cause them to disperse, that should put an end to the matter."

The Vice Director of State Affairs Li K'uang stepped forward and said, "This bald-headed Ch'en Hsüan-tsang shouldn't be killed – he should be used. You'd simply use him to kill himself; you'd not have someone else kill him."

As soon as Li K'uang finished speaking the emperor ordered his generals to go to the arsenal. There they selected a flying dragon sword, a King Wu blade, a stone sickle, a thunder-flower lance, an ornately carved five-cloud spear, a black-horse breastplate, silver-fish armour, a flying-tiger jade tent-standard, a great Yao and Shun banner, a peach blossom battle-axe, a ninth-month axe, a glass moon-mirror helmet, a red and gold flying-fish cape, a pair of demon-killing crystal-threaded boots, and a Big Dipper fan. All these things were sealed along with an imperial edict on yellow silk and sent by express messenger to the West. The proclamation, addressed to "Ch'en Hsüan-tsang, Brother of the Emperor, Supreme Commander for Wiping out Desire," read:

O great and trustworthy General, honourable as the tallies of jadeite, straight as the red strings of a lute: Yesterday all the lords from every direction spurred their horses to the Fatherland and competed with each other to report your martial valour that has left the mermaids of the western region speechless and the mirages at sea without form. It is difficult to find a man such as you in time of crisis or prosperity. We've often admired you and have heard only well about you. We turn our eyes to the western mountains and sigh with grief. Now bandits run amok in the West. Reports come daily from the passes. This is because Heaven resents separations, and it is time that you, our mendicant monk return. General, why don't you leap up from your white pool and beat your sword of intelligence, take off your dark robe and pour out your bag of wisdom? After you've cleared the green wood of bandits and the beacon fires no longer burn, we'll personally bind the head of your horse with one foot of white silk. This day you'll carry a carved spear and wear silver armour. Soon you'll sleep in tents painted with beasts. It would be difficult to inscribe our expressions of tearful thanks for your deeds, even on all the pillars of the Kunlun Mountains that support Heaven. Who under the sun that hangs on Heaven's Wall could compose fitting words upon your return? We hope you, General, will mull this over once and then again. We've long wearied of resorting to coral bow and green-jade arrows. The emperor ordered a jade tally brought from the palace and gave it to a messenger. Having received the imperial order, the messenger took the tally, the seal, and the edict and galloped out of the city. Monkey was shocked and afraid something might happen to entangle his Master. Not daring to make a sound, he immediately started in pursuit of the messenger. He fluttered down like a plum blossom, landing outside the city gate. There he resumed his normal appearance and searched for the messenger but the messenger had already ridden out of sight. Monkey became even more distressed. Not only had he failed to discover the truth or falsehood of the New Tang, now he had heard that, out of the blue, his Master was to be made a general. Monkey was startled, frightened, and seized with melancholy. As he jumped up to go search for his Master, he heard voices high in the air. He peered up and saw a great crowd of people swinging axes and using chisels to gouge holes in the sky. Monkey considered, "They don't have the look of celestial workers or ominous or evil stars. They are obviously people from earth but why are they doing this sort of work there? They aren't monsters disguised as men because I see no evil aura about them. Could it be that Heaven is infected with scabies and needs people to scratch its back? Or maybe Heaven has grown extra bones and has asked a surgeon to remove them? Or maybe Heaven is too old and they are chiselling it away so they can put in a new one. Or maybe Heaven has been covered by a screen, and they are removing the false Heaven for the real one. Or maybe the Milky Way has flooded and they are channelling away the excess. Or maybe they are rebuilding the Palace of Magic Mists and this is an auspicious day to break ground. Or maybe Heaven likes elaboration and has asked these people to carve a myriad lines to make a beautiful scene. Or maybe the Jade Emperor misses this mortal world and they are opening an imperial road so he can visit more often. I wonder if Heaven's blood is red or white. Or if Heaven's skin is one or two layers thick. Or if there will be a heart or not when Heaven's chest is opened. Or if Heaven's heart is slanted or straight. Or if Heaven is young or old, if it's male or female. Maybe they want to open Heaven and let its mountains hang down and dwarf the earth's mountains. Or maybe they are opening a mouth for Heaven to swallow the Underworld. But even if any of these things are true, no one on earth could have such power. I'll just go up and ask them; then I'll know for sure."

Monkey shouted, "You officers digging at Heaven! What king's men are you? Why are you doing this strange thing?"

All of them dropped their axes and chisels and saluted Monkey from the sky. They said, "Your Reverence from the Southeast, we're called Sky-walkers and come from Goldfish Village. Twenty years ago a wandering Taoist taught us the method of sky walking. In our village everyone knows how to write and recite charms and ride the clouds, so we changed the name of the village from Goldfish to Sky-walking Village. All our children are called Sky-walkers. Everyone in our village can move about in the sky. Who would have thought that when the king of the Emerald Green World – who is called Little Moon King – recently took in a monk, that the monk would turn out to be the second master of Sun Wukong, the Eminent Guest of the Underworld, Rebel in Heaven, Great Sage Equal of Heaven, and Master of Water-curtain Cave? He was none other than the great Tang priest Hsüan-tsang who received from the legitimate emperor of the Great Tang a cassock studded with a hundred jewels, a five-coloured abbot's staff, and the title 'Emperor's Younger Brother.' This priest whose secular name is Ch'en, was pure and chaste, never eating meat or drinking juice, nor allowing his eye to roam. He was more than qualified to go to the Western Paradise. But that Monkey Sun was berserk! He cut people down as if they were grass. The road to the West flowed red with the blood of his victims. When people talk about him they grind their teeth in hatred. The ruler of the kingdom called Great Compassion has taken pity on the suffering people and completely blocked the road to the West with a bronze wall that reaches to the sky. Knowing that Monkey could transform himself and become tall or short, he spread a closely meshed 'net of longing' for sixty thousand miles to go with the bronze wall. Since then, the western and eastern heavens have been divided in two. There is no way to cross over – not by boat or cart, water or land. On learning this, the Tang Priest was utterly crushed. That Monkey just stamped his feet and ran off. The priest's second disciple, Bullseye, and third disciple, Sandy, could only cry, and the white horse the priest rides wouldn't eat even a mouthful of grass. In this moment of crisis, the Tang Priest came up with a plan. He told his second and third disciples not to worry, whipped his horse and galloped into the Emerald Green World. The moment Little Moon King saw the priest, he was sure they had been lovers in a previous life and treated him like his own flesh and blood. He insisted on giving his Emerald Green World to the priest but the Tang Priest firmly refused, being determined only to go to the Western Paradise. Then Little Moon King tried to press against the priest, and the Tang Priest had to push him off. The king kept making advances but the monk just kept pushing him away. "After several days, Little Moon King had thought of nothing that might solve the Priest's problem, so he summoned the worthies of the realm for consultation. One of them devised a plan: 'If you'd find some sky gougers, they could open up Heaven and allow Mr. Ch'en to leap right into the Jade Emperor's palace. There he could ask for a pass and proceed directly to the Western Paradise. That seems like a good idea.' Little Moon King was half pleased and half doubtful but he straightaway called out soldiers and cavalry to search everywhere for sky gougers. When they came across a group of us catching wild geese in the air, they moved in on us. One general in golden armour waved his arms, pointed at us excitedly, and shouted, 'Here are the sky gougers! Surround them for me, little soldiers. Get them all, everyone. Put them in cangues and chains and we'll take them to the king.' Little Moon King was delighted. He ordered his men to remove the cangues and take off the chains and immediately had fine red juice brought and given to us. Then he forced us to chip away at the sky. As the saying goes, 'The skilful don't seem busy, and the busy aren't skilful. We do all sorts of other things but we're not used to digging into the sky with axes. Today we're treated so nicely by the king that we'd no choice but to sharpen our tools and

force ourselves to learn to dig at the firmament. We've been looking up for so long that our necks are stiff, and standing in the air so long that our legs ache. Around noon we pooled our strength and with one thrust cracked into Heaven. How were we to know we hit right at the foundation of the Palace of Magic Mists and caused it, all shiny and bright, to come tumbling down? There was a great commotion in Heaven and people yelled, 'Catch the thieves!' The panic didn't ease up for a long time. But the stars must be with us, because someone else will take the blame for what we did. After the commotion died down we're pretty scared. But when we bent our ears to listen, we heard Lao-tzu tell the Jade Emperor, 'Don't be angry. Don't get upset. This couldn't be the work of anyone but that little slave-dog of a Stable Groom, Monkey Sun. If you send out Heavenly soldiers now, I'm afraid there'll be trouble. It would be better to ask God to crush him beneath Five Phases Mountain. We must tell a god that Monkey's never again to be set free.' When we heard this, we knew we're in the clear, or at least we figured someone would take the blame, so we began to dig here again. There won't be another Palace of Magic Mists to tumble down. But it's too bad about Monkey Sun. In the world below he's hated all along the road to the West, and in the world above they rage at him. They've also sent word to God, and when Kuan-yin sees that God puts the blame on the ape, she'll not dare welcome him with her usual graces. Then we'll see where he can go!"

Someone else said, "Bah! Why feel sorry for that ape Sun? If it weren't for that slave-dog ape, we'd not be working here."

All the people wielding axes cried, "You're right! Curse that ape!"

A great roar went up with everyone shouting different things at the same time. "Stable Boy!"

"Juice Thief!"<sup>4</sup>

"Elixir Stealer!"

"Ginseng Robber!"

"Monkey Monster Tramp!" they cursed Monkey till his golden eyes blurred and his copper bones went numb.

**065**

**A Crack Reveals a Myriad of Bewildering Mirrors; their Original Form's Lost where the Shapes of Things Appear**

Subjected to these groundless accusations and cursed in such a humiliating way, Monkey became furious. He wanted to go up and kill them all but he thought, "When I left him, the Master's peacefully resting on the grass. What's he doing here in the Emerald Green World? This Little Moon King must be a demon." Dear Monkey wasted no words but left in a bound. Coming around a turn, he was confronted by a city wall with a moat. Above the city gate hung a flecked moss-green jade placard with three words inscribed in the seal style:

*Emerald Green World*

The 2 halves of the gate were ajar and Monkey, quite pleased, walked briskly in. Inside the gate however, he ran into another sheer wall towering before him. He ran along its entire length and back again but he could not find a single crack through which he might pass. Monkey laughed and said, "What kind of city is this? Could it be that there isn't a single person here? But if there weren't people, why'd a wall have been built? Let me take a closer look."

He searched for a long time but there was indeed no way through. Again his anger mounted. He pounded to the east and pounded to the west, pounded high and low – pounded until he knocked down a piece of green stone. Monkey tripped on the stone and fell into a brilliant place. Recovering, he blinked and looked about. He was in a tower made entirely of costly stones. Above, a great sheet of agate formed the roof, and the floor was a huge bright slab. A couch of amethyst, ten chairs of green marble, and a glistening pink table, on which stood an onyx teapot and two turquoise bells, furnished the place. Facing him were eight sapphire blue windows, all closed. Monkey could not see where he had come in and felt bewildered. He looked up and saw that the four walls were made of precious mirrors placed one above another. In all there must have been a million mirrors – large, small, and odd-shaped; square ones, round ones, and others. He couldn't count them all but a few of the ones he recognised included a Heavenly Emperor mirror with an animal-shaped hook; a white jade heart mirror; a self-doubt mirror; a blossom mirror; a wind mirror; a pair of bird mirrors, male and female; a mirror that looked like a purple cotton lotus; a water mirror; an ice-terrace mirror; an iron-faced lotus mirror; a "me" mirror; a man mirror; a moon mirror; a Hai-nan mirror; a mirror in the shape of Emperor Wu of Han<sup>1</sup> pining for his lady; a green lock mirror; a stillness mirror; a nothing mirror; a bronze mirror with seal-style characters in the hand of Li Ssu of the Ch'in dynasty; a parrot mirror; a mute mirror; a mirror that retains reflections; a mirror shaped like the first concubine of Emperor Hsüan-yüan;<sup>2</sup> a 1-smile; a pillow; a reflection-less; and a flying mirror. Monkey thought, "This will be fun. Let me reflect a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, and a hundred million of me."

He went to start mirroring himself but instead of his own image, what he saw was that every mirror contained other heavens and earths, suns and moons, mountains and forests. Amazed, he could do nothing but let his eyes wander. All at once he heard someone calling in a loud voice, "Reverend Sun, how've you been these many years since we parted?"

Monkey looked all around but there was no one and no ghostly aura in the tower. But the voice he heard could have come from nowhere else. Thoroughly confused, he suddenly spied a man holding a steel trident and standing by the inside face of a square mirror with an animal-shaped hook. Again he called loudly, "Reverend Sun, you needn't look surprised. I'm an old friend."

Monkey moved closer. "You do look familiar," he said, "but I can't place you."

The figure responded, "My name is Liu Po-ch'in. When you came out from under Five Phases Mountain I lent you a hand.<sup>3</sup> But you've forgotten so soon! That's how it is with people's feelings."

Monkey quickly saluted most politely and said, "Ten thousand pardons, great benefactor. What are you doing now? How is it that we're here in the same place?"

Po-ch'in said, "Why do you say 'in the same place?' You're in somebody else's world and I'm in your world. It's not the same place at all!"

Monkey said, "Since it's not the same, how can we see each other?"

Po-ch'in said, "No, no, you don't understand. Little Moon King built this tower of myriad mirrors. Every mirror takes care of one world; and each blade of grass, each tree, everything moving and still, is contained in these mirrors. Anything one might want to see comes before one's eyes. So this tower was named *the Three-thousand Major Chiliocosms!*"<sup>4</sup>

Monkey had another thought. He was about to ask something about the Tang emperor in order to decide whether the New Tang was real, when suddenly he saw an old lady dart out from the dark forest and push Liu Po-ch'in head over heels into the woods. They didn't come out again. Monkey was disappointed and stepped back. Seeing that the daylight had already faded to evening he mused, "It will soon be dark and I've not found the Master. I might as well take a good look into these mirrors. Then I'll decide what to do." So he began at the first of the mirrors that hung beneath the word *Heaven*. He saw there a man posting the results of the civil service examination. On the placard was written:

Palace Examination for the Cultivated Talent Degree

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE – LIU CH'UN

2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE – WU YU

3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE – KAO WEI-MING

Soon a crowd of thousands had gathered, shouting and excited to read the placard. At first, Monkey could make out only a general clamour but then came sounds of crying and cursing. Finally the crowd broke up and people walked away one by one. Monkey watched as one of them sat vacantly on a stone; one smashed his inkstand; one with his hair hanging like wilted weeds was being chased and swatted by his parents and teachers; one opened the case he clutched to his side, took out his jade lute, burned it, then cried bitterly; one who took a sword from the headboard of his bed and tried to kill himself was stopped by a girl; one, his head saluted absentmindedly, took out his own essay and read it repeatedly; 1 laughed loudly and pounded the table shouting, "It's damned fate!" 1 hung his head and vomited blood; several elders bought spring juice to help ease the depression of another; one reciting poems alone wildly kicked a stone at the end of each line of verse; one wouldn't allow his boy-servants to report that his name had not appeared on the list; one seemed angry and depressed but smiled frostily to himself as if to say, *I got what I deserved*.

1 was truly angry and unhappy but forced a smile. Of the group whose names appeared on the list, one of them put on new clothes and shoes; one forced himself not to smile; one wrote on a wall; one read his own examination paper a thousand times, then carefully put it in his sleeve and went out; 1 sighed in sympathy for the others; one made a point of saying that the examining officials were not up to par; one made some companions read the placard, and, though unwilling, they forced themselves to read it to the end; one said pompously that this year's list was quite fair; one said that his dream on New Year's Eve had come true; and another one said that he hadn't been satisfied with his essay. Later, someone who had made a clean copy of the first-place essay sat in the balcony of a juice shop reading it, his head swaying back and forth. A young man beside him asked, "Why is it so short?"

The one who was reading said, "The essay is long – I chose only his best phrases to copy. Come here and we'll read it together. You can learn some of his methods and pass next year." The two of them began to read in a clear voice:

The revitalised lost vocation, re-established human relations, the true vista in learning, the perfect spirit in government – what are these? This sphere is, like Hun-tun,<sup>5</sup> irretrievable. This principle is, like breathing, indispensable. Therefore, the sperm of original nature has never issued forth; even the ashes of written books maintain spirituality. In a word, the primal act of creation should not be seen as below the mean, and the secret motivations of the spirits can easily be pinched between 2 fingers.

Monkey burst out laughing and said, "Five centuries ago when I was in the Eight Trigrams Cauldron,<sup>6</sup> overheard Lao-tzu talking with the Jade-history Mortal about the destiny of literature. He said, 'From the time of Yao and Shun to Confucius' was the Cycle of Pure Heaven. That may be called great abundance. From Mencius to Li Ssu<sup>8</sup> was the Pure Earth Cycle and can be called middle abundance. The five centuries since has been the Water and Thunder Cycle. The body of literature has been vast but its vitality has fallen short. This may be called the small decline. Eight centuries hence it will turn to the Mountain-water Cycle. Things will be rotten! Rotten!' The Jade-history Mortal asked why it would be so bad. Lao-tzu replied, 'Alas, a bunch of earless, eyeless, tongue-less, nose-less, handless, legless, heartless, lungless, boneless, muscle-less, bloodless, and spiritless people will be called "outstanding scholars." In the century of their lives, they will only use up one sheet of paper, and after their coffin lids are nailed shut, no two lines they wrote will be remembered. Their writings will be far from the truth. Though Hun-tun will have been dead for several myriad years, they'll not let him lie. Rather than letting Yao and Shun sit in their Yellow Palace in peace, they'll insist on dragging them in. Breathing is a pure and empty thing but instead of nourishing the breath they'll hinder it. The spirit is the treasure of the body but instead of calming it they'll stir it up. What do you think this kind of literature is called? It's called *gauze-hat<sup>9</sup> writing*. If they happen to write a few sentences, it will be their good fortune, because then others will support them, flatter them, and fear them.' By the time Lao-tzu had finished speaking, the Jade-history Mortal was in tears and left. When I remember this exchange, it's clear that the number one essay belongs to the Mountain-water Cycle. But what do I care, anyway? Let me take a look at the second mirror under *Heaven*."

**066**

**Through the Cast Bronze Mirror the Mind-Monkey Enters the Past; In Green Pearl's Tower the Wayward Disciple Knits His Brows**

Monkey turned to gaze into the second mirror under the character *Heaven*, an antique cast bronze mirror. There under a great cypress tree stood a stone tablet on which twelve characters were carved in seal script saying: "The World of the Ancients was originally neighbour to the Headache World."

Monkey said, "Since it's the World of the Ancients, the First Emperor of Ch'in must be in there. The other day that concubine sweeping in the New Tang palace said he possessed a Mountain-removing Bell. I'll grab him and take his bell, then I'll sweep away the thousand mountains and ten thousand gorges from the road to the Western Paradise. The monsters and robbers will have no place to hide." He thereupon changed himself into a bronze-drilling insect, climbed onto the face of the mirror, and got ready. He bit out one mouthful, then bored through the mirror. All at once he fell into a high pavilion. Hearing several people below, he didn't dare show his real self but remained in the form of a drilling insect and hid in the crack of a window covered in green flowers. It so happened that in the World of the Ancients there was a beautiful lady called Green Pearl.<sup>1</sup> Day in and day out she treated her guests to banquets with drinking games and the reciting of poems. After planning for a long while she had a hundred-foot-tall pavilion built and called it the Fragrance-gripping Pavilion. Just that day Lady Hsi-shih<sup>2</sup> and Miss Silk<sup>3</sup> had come together to congratulate Green Pearl on the new pavilion. Green Pearl was delighted. She immediately had a banquet spread in the pavilion for them to join her in sisterly affection. Miss Silk sat in the middle; Green Pearl sat to her right and Lady Hsi-shih to her left. A number of maid servants attended the ladies: some served juice, some picked flowers, and some held the dice bowls. Monkey, still in the window, decided to play a prank. He changed into a maid-servant and sneaked inconspicuously into their midst. He looked as such: *Top-knot like a goddess of the River Lo, "eyebrows of Chu Hsiao-chi. The king of Ch'u<sup>5</sup> loved a waist like that the emperor of Han, a robe. Above, autumn-wind earrings, below, lotus-flower cups.* <sup>6</sup>Then the maids-in-waiting began to giggle and said, "Our Fragrance-gripping Pavilion truly snatches up fragrance. Even though this beautiful girl doesn't live here, she came right in."

Another maid said to Monkey, "Have you seen Lady Green Pearl, sister?"

Monkey said, "Elder sister, I'm new here. Could you take me to meet her?"

The maid giggled and led Monkey to meet Lady Green Pearl. Green Pearl looked shocked. With tears in her eyes she said to Monkey, "Beautiful Lady Yü,<sup>7</sup> I've not seen you for so long! But why is your fair face so sad?"

Monkey was surprised to hear this and thought, "Since I was born from a stone egg, I've never been reincarnated by way of any parents, and I've never chased the mists and flowers. When did I know this Lady Green Pearl? Since when am I Beautiful Lady Mud, Beautiful Lady Copper, Beautiful Lady Iron, or Beautiful Lady Grass? But that's what she calls me. Well, what do I care if I'm Beautiful Lady Yü or not? I'll play the role for a little while – it should be amusing. This is called meeting one error with another. Just one thing – since I've become Beautiful Lady Yü, I must have a husband somewhere.

If she asks about him and my answer turns out to be a case of ‘a horse’s jaw not matching an ass’s head,’ i’ll show my true colours. I’ll sound her out a bit and find out about my ‘husband,’ then I can join in the banquet.”

Green Pearl called again, “Beautiful Lady! Quick, have a seat! Although what’s in the cup is weak, it will chase away your gloom.”

Monkey put on a long face and said to Green Pearl, “Sister, people say juice cheers the joyful heart but my husband and I can’t see each other. The silken strands of rain and gusts of wind have long pierced and broken my heart. How can I swallow juice?”

Green Pearl started and said, “But my dear lady, what are you saying? Your husband is Hsiang Yü, Hegemon of Ch’u. You live together – why can’t you see each other?”

Catching the 5 words “Hsiang Yü, Hegemon of Ch’u,” Monkey answered off the top of his head, “Sister, you don’t know that the Hegemon of Ch’u of today is not the same man as before. There is a concubine named Sorrow of Ch’u who uses her many charms to entice my husband and separate the two of us. Once we’re walking in the moonlight and, when I didn’t look at the water weeds in the pond, she purposely leaned on the railing as if lost in thought. My husband said, ‘The way she gazes is so lovely.’ Another time we’re looking at flowers and I didn’t call for juice. She went to her room and got a pot with a cracked ice design containing Purple Flower Jade Dew juice. She offered it and said, ‘Long life to my gracious lord,’ and just as she left, she winked at him seductively. My husband saw her off with a twinkle in his eye. I’ve nothing but love for him – my only wish is that we’d always be a pair of mandarin ducks. When I saw those two putting me on a closet shelf, how could I be anything but sad and resentful? Then my husband complained that I didn’t pay any attention to him and, what’s more, that Sorrow of Ch’u had been trying hard to please. He took his sword and scabbard from under the bed, and slung them across his back. He didn’t even call for any of his men but just left looking straight ahead. I don’t know where he went. That was twenty days ago – more than half a month and not a word from him.”

And Monkey began to wail. When Green Pearl saw this, her tears soaked half her silken sleeve. Hsi-shih and Miss Silk sighed together. Even the maids carrying the juice pots felt tears fill their throats and sympathetic pains in their hearts. It’s a fact that a sad person shouldn’t talk to other sad people – if they do, they only become sadder. The four of them sat down and Hsi-shih said, “Our Beautiful Lady isn’t happy tonight and we three should try to cheer her up. We mustn’t add to her sadness.” So saying, she produced six dice and held them in her hands. She called out, “Sisters of this banquet, hear my command! If the first throw doesn’t show a one, each of us will recite a line of old-style verse. If the second throw doesn’t throw a two, we must all confess our sexual fancies. If the third throw doesn’t show a three, I’ll punish myself with one big cup, then pass it to one of you.”

Hsi-shih looked up and threw the dice and shouted, “There’s no one on the first throw!”

Green Pearl trilled a line of poetry in a sweet voice: “When my husband doesn’t come, the cold night is long.”

Miss Silk laughed in great admiration and said, “The double-meaning in this line is magnificent.” She also recited a line: “The Jade Lady’s earrings dangle in the autumn wind.”

Monkey thought, “Now it’s my turn. I can remember several lines of other kinds of writing but thinking of poetry makes my head ache. What’s more, I don’t know if Beautiful Lady Yü knows poetry or not. If she doesn’t, I’ll be all right; if she does, I’ll give myself away.”

Green Pearl said, “A line, please, Beautiful Lady.” Monkey answered evasively, “I can’t write poetry.”

Hsi-shih laughed and said, “*The Selected Poems of the Beautiful Lady* has circulated throughout the Central Plain. Even tiny children know that Beautiful Lady Yü is talented in composing *tz’u*- and *fu*-style poetry. And here today you’re acting coy!”

Monkey had no choice but to raise his face and seek inspiration. He was lost in thought a long while, then asked the group, “Is it all right if I don’t use a line from an ancient poet?”

Green Pearl said, “You’ll have to ask our leader.”

Monkey asked Hsi-shih and she said, “What difference does it make? Once you compose a line, it’ll be the same as one from the ancients!”

Everyone inclined her ear to listen and Monkey recited a line: “I regret my heart follows clouds and rain in flight.”

Green Pearl asked Miss Silk, “What do you think of the Beautiful Lady’s line?”

Miss Silk replied, “Who would dare say the Beautiful Lady’s poetry is not good? Only this line somehow smacks of monkish-ness.”

Hsi-shih laughed and said, “The Beautiful Lady was once a nun for half a month.”

Monkey said, “Oh, don’t tease. Would you please pass the dice bowl on?”

Hsi-shih quickly handed the dice bowl to Green Pearl who lifted her hand and tossed the dice. She shouted, “The second throw doesn’t show a two!”

Hsi-shih said, “It’s easy for you to confess but hard for me.”

Green Pearl asked, “But sister, what’s so hard for you to confess?”

Hsi-shih exclaimed, “Humph! You’re trying to embarrass me! You must know I’ve had two husbands!”

Green Pearl persisted, “Even though we’ve different names, we’re all your flesh and blood. What harm’s there in it? I’ve an idea – why don’t you give us a line about King Wu and then one about young Fan?”

Hsi-shih heard this and straightaway confessed: “*Young Fan: Green years on Willow Stream. King Wu: Rosy cheeks in a jade palace. Young Fan: Vowed to the sun on Kunlun Mountains. King Wu: Slept the night beneath a Wutong tree. Young Fan: Lamented the moon on Five Lakes. King Wu: Grieved day-long once drunk.*”

After hearing this, Green Pearl tipped her cup and made her own confession: *‘I’ve a peak of pearls; ten-thousand piculs of tears. Tonight in Fragrance-gripping Pavilion; another year in Snow-spread Hall.’*

Green Pearl sighed with each word. Hsi-shih said in a loud voice, “Penalty! I wanted you to tell about delights but instead you tell about sorrows!”

Green Pearl admitted her guilt and accepted a juice penalty. Meanwhile Miss Silk tried to get Monkey to go next while Monkey deferred to her. They bandied back and forth but neither would confess.

Finally Green Pearl said, “I’ve got another idea. Sister Silk, you say one line, and then you say one, Beautiful Lady.”

Hsi-shih said, “That can’t be done. Hegemon Ch’u has a valiant and heroic air. Young Shen is fair of face, gentle and warm. How could they be put together?”

Miss Silk laughed and said, “It’s all right. She is she and I’m I. Let me confess first.” And she said, “Weep for the moon in South Tower.”

Without thinking, Monkey said, “Worship God in the Western Paradise.”

Green Pearl pointed at Monkey and said, “I think you must be confused, Beautiful Lady. Why do you bring up worshipping God in the Western Paradise?”

Monkey said, “My words are profound and want explication. *Paradise* means *husband*; *Western* stands for *Western Ch’u*; *worship* means *return* and *God* means *heart*. So what it means is, ‘My heart returns to my husband in Western Ch’u.’ Although he dislikes me, I think only of him.”

Green Pearl breathed a long sigh of admiration. Monkey feared that if he stayed too long at the banquet it would delay his journey, so he pretended he was drunk and about to throw up. Hsi-shih said, “Let’s not have a third throw. Let’s go look at the moon.”

The 4 of them left the banquet and walked downstairs. They stepped aimlessly over some wild flowers and disported themselves with some water weeds. Monkey, wanting only to find the First Emperor of Ch’in, thought up a plan to get away. “I’ve a pain in my heart. I can’t bear it...can’t bear it – please let me go home,” he moaned.

Green Pearl said, “Heart pains are ordinary things for us. Don’t you worry, I’ll have someone ask Dr. Ch’i Po to come and take your pulse.”

Monkey said, “No, that won’t do. These days doctors are the last people I want around. All they can do is make a live man dead and small ills big. When it comes to healing, they only want quick results – they don’t care about your body. And if your humours are unbalanced, they make you take ginseng, and then you suffer for it the rest of your life. I still want to go home.”

Green Pearl said, “If you go home and don’t see Hegemon Ch’u, you’ll get depressed again, and if you see Sorrow of Ch’u, your hatred will start all over again. People with heart pain should avoid depression and hatred.”

The “sisters” all tried to persuade Monkey to stay but Monkey insisted that he wouldn’t. Seeing that the illness was serious and that she couldn’t make her stay, Green Pearl could only ask four of her personal maids to escort Beautiful Lady Yü home. Monkey put on a sleepy face, clasped his hands over his chest, and took leave of the *sisters*. Supported by the four maids, he descended the hundred-foot Fragrance-gripping Pavilion. As they walked toward the main road, Monkey said, “You four go on back. Be sure to say thanks for me, and tell your mistress and my little sister’ we’ll get together again tomorrow.”

The maids said, “Just a moment ago when we left, Lady Green Pearl instructed us to accompany you all the way to Hegemon Ch’u’s estate.”

Monkey said, “So you don’t want to return, eh? See my cudgel!”

No sooner had he spoken than the cudgel was in his hand. With one full-power sweep, the four maids were beaten to red powder. Monkey returned to his real form. He raised his head to look around and found himself directly in front of Nü-kua’s gate. He was pleased and said, “Heaven was chopped open by Little Moon King’s sky-gougers, and yesterday they put the blame on me. Although Lao-tzu is obnoxious and the Jade Emperor stupid, I made a mistake, too. I’d not have done something five centuries ago to start tongues wagging. Still, I’m not going to surrender myself now. I’ve heard that Nü-kua has had long experience in patching heaven. I’ll ask her to fix it for me today and then go crying up to the Palace of Magic Mists and wash myself clean. This is really a great opportunity.” He walked up to the gate for a better look but all he saw were 2 black doors shut tight. The doors were sealed with a piece of paper that said: “Went to the Yellow Emperor’s for a chat on the twentieth. Back in ten days. Sorry, honourable visitor. I extend my apologies here in advance.” Monkey read this and turned to go. He heard the cock crow 3 times. It was nearly dawn. He had travelled several million miles and still hadn’t seen the First Emperor of Ch’in.

### The True Beauty Dies for a Face Half Covered with Tears; the General of Chu’s Grieved at the Mention of Ping-hsiang

All of a sudden Monkey noticed a dark man sitting in a high pavilion. Monkey laughed and said, “So there are rebels in the World of the Ancients, too! His whole face has been blackened with coal and he’s on public exhibit here.”

He advanced a few steps, then said, “No, he’s no rebel; it’s a temple for Chang Fei.”<sup>1</sup> But after thinking it over he said, “If it were Chang Fei’s temple, he’d wear a turban. Even if there’s a new style, at most he’d be wearing a general’s helmet – an emperor’s crown can’t be worn by just anyone. Since he’s wearing a crown and his face is dark, this must be Great Yü,<sup>2</sup> the Dark Emperor. I’ll go see him and ask his secret method for controlling monsters and killing demons. Then I’ll not have to bother looking for the First Emperor of Ch’in.”

As he neared the front of the pavilion, he saw that below the platform stood a stone column, from the top of which flew a white banner. The banner had seven words written in purple saying, “The Famous Pre-Han Knight, Hsiang Yü.”

When Monkey read this he laughed aloud and said, “That just goes to show you’d not think about things that haven’t happened – when you think about them, they’ll not turn out the way you expect. Here I speculated this way and that, saying he was Great Yü, the Dark Emperor, or Chang Fei, or a rebel – who’d have thought he’d be none other than my ‘husband’ from Green Pearl’s tower.”

He thought a bit more and said, “Wait a minute – I drilled into this World of the Ancients to find the First Emperor of Ch’in and borrow his Mountain-removing Bell. The Hegemon of Ch’u whom I just saw, lived after him. Why haven’t I seen the First Emperor? I’ve got an idea – I’ll climb the pavilion to see Hsiang Yü and ask him for information about the First Emperor. Then I can figure out where he’s.”

Monkey jumped up for a closer look. He saw that below the pavilion there was an area with green grass, red railings, flowers here and there, and bird-call everywhere. There sat a beautiful lady. Monkey heard someone call, “Beautiful Lady Yü! Beautiful Lady Yü!”

Monkey laughed and said, “Well, well. Old monkey from Green Pearl’s tower is here now. What’s it to me if this Lady Yü is dead or alive?”

Monkey gave his body a shake and, as before, changed himself into a likeness of the beautiful lady. He climbed the pavilion, took out a long white handkerchief, and began to daub at tears. With only half his face showing, he looked at Hsiang Yü as if resentful and angry. Hsiang Yü was startled and fell to his knees. Monkey turned his back. Hsiang Yü flew over to kneel in front of Monkey and said, “Beautiful Lady, have pity on your bedfellow! Please, a little smile!”

When Monkey didn’t respond, Hsiang Yü could do nothing but tear up in sympathy. Then Monkey’s face became red as a peach blossom. He pointed at Hsiang Yü and said, “Stupid thief! A feared general like you can’t even protect a girl! How can you’ve the face to sit on this high platform?”

Hsiang Yü only blubbered and didn’t dare reply. Monkey put on a look of pity. He helped him up and said, “It’s often said there’s yellow gold on a man’s knees. After this you really mustn’t kneel without call.”

Hsiang Yü said, “What are you saying, Beautiful Lady? When I saw you knit your sorrowful brows, my heart and lungs were crushed. What do I care about my body? What did you mean by what you said?”

Monkey said, “I can’t keep it from you, Your Majesty. I was feeling a bit ill, and slept on the rattan couch for half an hour. But then I saw a monkey spirit jump out of the magnolia tree outside the window. He claimed to be the Great Sage Equal to Heaven and the Nun Sun Wukong, the one who caused a ruckus in the Heavenly Palace five centuries ago.”

When Hsiang Yü heard this he leapt to his feet and shouted “Get my sword from the headboard of the jade bed! Get my sword! If you can't find the sword bring the tiger-head spear.” Then he scratched his head, stamped his feet, and bellowed, “Where is he now?”

Monkey leaned over and said, “You needn't get so excited, Your Majesty. Don't get so angry that you hurt yourself. Let me tell you slowly. That ape was disgusting. He came up beside the couch and flirted lewdly with me. Though I'm not bright, how could I be as stupid as to mistake adultery for chastity? I shouted for the maids but didn't know the ape had said a charm to freeze them in their tracks. I knew something was wrong when I'd not get a single maid to come. I flung down my round fan and straightened my gown. The ape glared at me. Then he grabbed me and threw me into the Blossom Rain Tower, then turned and jumped away. I was terrified in the Blossom Rain Tower but I stole a glance to see where he'd gone. What do you think he did, Your Majesty? He went and sat on my flower-shaded rattan couch, changed into my likeness, and called for the maids. I'm afraid that in a little while he'll try to delude Your Majesty. I'm not worth troubling over – I'm just afraid that Your Majesty won't be able to tell the true from the false and will fall into poisonous hands. My crying was only for you, Your Majesty.”

When Hsiang Yü heard this, he took the sword in his right hand and the spear in his left and screamed “Kill him!”

He leapt from the pavilion and charged to the flower-shaded couch. There he cut off Beautiful Lady Yü's head and threw it, dripping with blood, into the lotus pond. He told all the maids, “Don't cry. This was a false lady, so I killed her. The real lady is in my pavilion.”

Holding back their tears, the maids quickly followed King Hsiang to the pavilion. When they saw Monkey they changed from sad to happy and said, “Our true lady is indeed here. It nearly scared us maids to death.”

King Hsiang was very happy. To the maids he said, “Sweep the Blossom Rain Tower. And carefully prepare some juice: first to calm the lady's nerves and second to celebrate my joy over killing the monster and dispelling doubt.” The maids below the pavilion answered, “Yes, Your Majesty,” in one voice. Meanwhile the maids in the pavilion came to soothe Monkey's breast and stroke his back. They offered tea and water, and some asked, “Were you afraid, Madam? Is your heart still thumping?”

Monkey said, “A little.”

1 asked, “You didn't fall and hurt your lower body, did you?”

Monkey said, “No, I didn't. It's just that this gasping for breath is hard to bear.”

King Hsiang said, “Gasping for breath isn't serious. Just calm down and sit for a while – you'll be all right.”

Suddenly a couple of maids knelt before the king and the lady and said, “Your Majesty, My Lady, please come to the feast.”

Monkey said to himself, “I'd not do everything he says yet.” He pretended to be seized by an evil spirit, and with his two eyes staring blankly at the king he said, “Give me back my head!”

King Hsiang was alarmed and said repeatedly, “Beautiful Lady! Beautiful Lady!” Monkey did not respond but rolled his eyes back till only the whites showed. King Hsiang said, “This has to be Sun Wukong's ghost – it's not dispersed yet and taken possession of Beautiful Lady's body. Quick! Get the yellow-robed Taoist priest to exorcise the spirit. Then she'll be all right.”

A little while later 2 maids and the Taoist priest mounted the pavilion. The Taoist carried a bell and spat magic water from his mouth. He recited a spell: “In the time of the Three Emperors, there're the Yellow Emperor, Hsüan Yuan, and the Divine Lord, Great Shun. Great Shun's name's Yü. Hsüan-yüan's family name's Kung-sun. Sun Yü and Yü Sun were originally related through marriage but today there's been a feud – when'll it be settled? I respect to your valiant spirit, Honourable Monk and Great Sage, Sir Sun. Fly quickly to the upper regions and start another row in the Heavenly Palace. Release Beautiful Lady Yü and seek the Tang Priest. Quick! Quick! Follow my orders. Otherwise this Taoist priest will gain no merit and a Religious monk will have to come.”

Monkey called out, “Taoist Priest! Do you know who I'm?”

The priest knelt and said, “A millennium to you, my lady.”

Monkey scolded, “Taoist Priest! Really! You can't get rid of me! I'm the Great Sage Equal of Heaven! I've a score to settle and I possessed her body to do it. Today's an auspicious day. I'm determined to marry Beautiful Lady Yü. Why don't you act as go-between? It'll be worth your while – you'll get the go-between's fee.”

After that he yelled some more gibberish. The Taoist priest's limbs went numb. He could only hold his sword before him and wave it feebly back and forth. He meekly spat half a mouthful of magic water and recited in a low voice, “Make haste to follow the order of the Supreme Lord Lao-tzu.”

But there was no response. Monkey was secretly sorry for the priest, so after a while he made his eyes look alive again. He called out, “Your Majesty ... dear Husband ... where're you?”

King Hsiang was greatly pleased. He immediately gave the priest a hundred taels of white gold and sent him back to the temple. Then he hurried over to help Monkey to his feet and said, “Beautiful Lady, why did you frighten me so?”

Monkey said, “I don't know. I only saw that Monkey coming near my couch again, and then I felt dizzy. When he took that mouthful of magic water from the Taoist priest, he couldn't stand steady, then he ran off in the direction of the southwest. But now my head is very clear – let's go and drink some juice.”

King Hsiang took Monkey's hand. They walked down from the pavilion and went to sit in the Blossom Rain Tower. There phoenix-lamps cast their brilliance, cinnamon candles flickered, and the maids all stood in rows. After several rounds of juice, Monkey suddenly stood up and said to Hsiang Yü, “Your Majesty, I want to sleep.”

Hsiang Yü quickly called, “Maid P'ing-hsiang! Light the candles.” The two of them went into the bedroom holding hands. They had a cup of tea from Mount Chieh and sat side-by-side on the couch. Monkey thought, “If I leave now, I'll not get any information about the First August Emperor of Ch'in. But what if I go inside the bed curtains with him and he makes some move? Should I let him or not? I'd be better off finding a way to escape.” And he said to Hsiang Yü, “Your Majesty, there's something I've been meaning to say to you but there's been so much going on that every time I see you I forget. Ever since I've been with you, I've hoped to have children to carry on after us forever. Who would have thought that these several years there'd be no results? And also, Your Majesty, you love only me and haven't had to look around for concubines. Now the snow drifts in your locks and your body's grown plump. Although I'm not clever I secretly fear you'll become a lonely man, and that when you die you'll be a ghost without an heir. The maid P'ing-hsiang has natural beauty and supple grace; her eyes embrace a man like mist. I've sounded out her literary taste several times and find her quite sensitive. Why doesn't Your Majesty call her to serve you tonight?”

The colour drained from King Hsiang's face and he said, “Beautiful Lady, I think today's shock must have tipped your heart. Why should such a jealous person as you say such an unjealous thing?”

Monkey smiled and said, “Your Majesty, it's only for your own good that I'm not usually so tolerant. Now I give you my leave for the sake of your sons and grandsons. My heart isn't tipped. I only hope that in the future your heart won't become slanted.”

King Hsiang said, “Beautiful Lady, even if you asked me ten thousand times, I'd not dare to take P'ing-hsiang. Have you forgotten so soon that five years ago on the fifteenth of the first month, the time of the Lantern Festival, we vowed to share life and death together? Now you're teasing me.”

Monkey saw that it would not work. He smiled again and said, “Your Majesty, I only fear you might forsake me. How'd I ever forsake you? But now there's something else that might upset you.”

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4 Drumbeats between Ch'in and Ch'u; Beautiful Ladies True and False, Appear in the Same Mirror

Hsiang Yü asked Beautiful Lady Yü, “What's it?”

Monkey said, “The shock I'd from that ape today upset my heart and blood. Perhaps Your Majesty would enter the silk curtain of mutual happiness first? I'll stay here on the couch and rest a while. I'd also like to have some green tea and wait till the depression in my heart eases. Then I'll come to bed.”

Hsiang Yü embraced Monkey and said, “How'd I leave you and go to sleep alone? I'll stay up till the first watch if you don't go to bed till the first watch. I'll stay up all night if you don't go to bed all night. Beautiful Lady,” he continued, “I've had too many cups of juice tonight. My insides are knotted in a World of Grief. Let me tell you some stories to keep you company and calm myself too.”

Monkey giggled and said, “I hope Your Majesty will control your temper and talk slowly.”

King Hsiang assumed an air of forbearance and impassioned indignation to deliver his story, grasping his scabbard with one hand and placing his left foot forward. He began: “Beautiful Lady, Beautiful Lady, my life is complete! This Hsiang Yü is a true man. Until I was twenty I'd not studied calligraphy or swordsmanship. When I saw how stupid the Ch'in Emperor was, I led eight thousand men and took along the seventy-two year old Fan Tseng' with the one intention of replacing the Ch'in Emperor. At that time there was a Taoist in a feathered robe who knew the workings of the cosmos. Several times I sent men to see him, and each time he said Ch'in's mandate had not run out. Beautiful Lady, do you think Ch'in's mandate had really expired or not? Later my power waxed strong and my ambition was fierce. Even good old Heaven was no longer in control. Ch'in shouldn't have ended but it did; Ch'u shouldn't have risen but it did. One morning I hung up recited I's”<sup>2</sup> head, reeking of blood. The courage of all the generals took flight and they stood with their tongues hanging and knees shaking. Those days it was great fun being Hsiang Yü. When Chang Han<sup>3</sup> came to do battle, I went out to meet him. The strength of the Ch'in army was still great then. A general rode in front of my horse and I shouted at him, ‘What's your name?’ When he saw my dark face and heard my rumbling voice, he fell from his silver dappled horse with a thud. I spared that one. Then came another general. On his fluttering red banner was clearly written, ‘Great Ch'in General Huang Chang.’ I thought, ‘If Ch'in has come to this, it's no longer great,’ and let out a laugh, ‘Ha! Ha! Ha!’ on the battlefield. I'd not have guessed that the sight of my laughing face would crush his bones to powder. His spear hung limp and half his body sagged; frantic, he waved a signal banner and beat a green metal gong. Then I saw a general in gold armour rushing away toward his own camp. By then I was on the edge of the Ch'in encampment. I lost my temper and taunted Chang Han: ‘Little Ch'in general, you don't dare stick your own head out! Instead you send out these three- or four-inch high babies carrying wooden sticks to offer themselves to my sword.’ Then the blade of my precious sword said to me, ‘I don't want to drink the blood of those little lackeys – I want Chang Han's blood!’ I heeded the words of my precious sword and let Huang Chang go. Beautiful Lady, what kind of man do you think Chang Han was? It was already sunset and that lackey Chang Han was leading ten thousand crack troops. He didn't open his mouth, didn't say a word. He picked up a jade-handled mountain-cleaving axe and swung it at my head. My whole body was aflame and my precious blade began to hum. One of my aides, Kao San-ch'u, seemed to me a man of ambitious mettle. He said, ‘Chang Han must not be killed. He should be made to surrender. I need a cook in my camp – give the job to Chang Han.’ I listened to Kao San-ch'u's suggestion and lightly swung the tip of my sword, killed the dappled dragon-horse he rode, and sent him away with Kao. Was Chang Han ever scared!”

Monkey said in a low voice, “Have some tea, Your Majesty, then you can slowly tell me more.”

No sooner had Hsiang Yü stopped speaking than they heard a “thump...thump...” sound from the guard tower. It was the second watch. Hsiang Yü said, “Beautiful Lady, don't you want to sleep?”

Monkey said, “My heart is still depressed.”

Hsiang Yü said, “Since you'll not sleep, I'll go on with the story. Next morning at daybreak I was still snoring in my tiger-head tent when I heard a million men shouting from the south, ‘Ten millennia! Ten millennia! From the north a million shouted ‘Ten millennia! Ten millennia! From the west a million shouted, ‘Ten millennia! and from the east another million shouted, ‘Ten millennia! I rolled over in bed and asked the orderly, ‘I suppose that's the Emperor of Ch'in who's led his soldiers out to fight me? Since he's also an emperor I'll put on a new suit of armour today.’ Beautiful Lady, what do you think the orderly said? He knelt beside my tent and said with a stutter, ‘Y-Your M-M-Majesty is mistaken; are you still using the word *Ch'in* today? The lords from the eight directions stand before Your Majesty's jade tent and shout *ten* millennia!”

“Hearing him say this I quickly combed my hair and put on my helmet, washed my feet and put on my shoes but I didn't bother to put on new armour. I gave orders at once calling all the lords under Heaven to come through the gate and hear me speak. My order was given at 9:00 a.m. Twelve o'clock passed. One o'clock passed. But the lords outside the gate had not yet come in. I began to have doubts. I told the orderly to go out and ask the lords, ‘Since you want to see me, come in on the double! Do you expect me to come out and see you?’ I was going to say something more when the gates of the camp were suddenly thrown wide open. I saw all the world's kings and lords all shortened by one half! I was shocked and the colour left my face. I thought to myself, ‘Why do these heroes have only half a body each?’ When I looked closely, I saw they were using their knees as feet and crawling step-by-step up the stairs. Before my tent and to the right, several people wearing crowns and bearded robes knelt face down, and to the left knelt still others. I was just about to reproach them and say, ‘Why did it take you so long to come in after I called?’ when my aides reported, ‘Your Majesty, when all the lords now at the foot of the steps received Your Majesty's orders, they assembled for a conference in front of your tent. They didn't dare walk through the gate standing up. They didn't dare merely salute with folded hands, nor did they dare appear disorderly. They discussed it among themselves, then fell salute on the ground and didn't move. They talked it over – they were sad and anxious, worried and depressed, frantic and bewildered. Finally they decided on a *knee-walking method*; only then did they dare come to meet you.’ When I heard this I'd a bit of compassion and called out, ‘You lords of all the earth, raise up your heads!’ Who do you think dared to move his head or legs? I only heard a rumbling from the ground. It wasn't the sound of a bell or drum or gold-ringed reed whistle. When I listened carefully, it turned out that the lords were still saying, ‘Ten millennia! They continued to respect and did not dare lift their heads. Thinking back on it, that was a great year for Hsiang Yü.”

Monkey made a sound like a flower falling on an empty stairway and said, “Your Majesty, you must be exhausted, have a little green bean broth. Wait a bit and then go on with the story.” Just as Hsiang Yü stopped speaking, the drum in the guard tower was sounded 3 times. Monkey said, “It's the third watch.”

Hsiang Yü said, “Beautiful Lady, your heartsickness hasn't yet passed. Allow me to continue the story. After this, the Lord of P'ei<sup>4</sup> was disrespectful and put me off a bit but I ignored him and entered the Land-within-the-Passes. I saw a man ten miles off, conspicuous in a crown studded with pearls and jade, like the sun, moon, and stars. He wore an elegant robe with mountains, dragons and water weeds embroidered upon it and rode a rich chariot painted green and blue and carved with phoenixes among coiled dragons. His retinue of officials carrying silver and gold seals and draped in yellow



robes with purple sashes numbered several thousand. They marched in a serpentine column that stretched into the far distance. When they saw me through the pines, the man in front quickly removed his sun-moon-star jade and pearl crown and put on a commoner's hempen cap. He took off his mountain-dragon-water weed embroidered robe and put on a sombre green and white robe. He got down from the green and blue dragon and phoenix chariot and clasped his hands behind his back. The officials carrying silver and gold seals and wearing yellow robes and purple sashes all changed into grass sandals and wooden belts and painted their faces red. They fell to their knees and saluted themselves on the ground, wishing they could go several thousand or ten thousand feet into the ground. When they were thus properly dressed, I galloped up to them on my dark dappled horse. On all sides I heard 'Ten millennia to our Lord! Ten millennia to our Lord!' I glanced out of the corner of my eyes and the leader again said, 'Ten millennia to our Lord – I'm King Tzu-ying of Ch'in<sup>5</sup> and am come to surrender to you.' In those days I was quick-tempered and my arm was swift. One swipe of my sword – 'whoosh!' – made them all, king and official, young and old, headless ghosts. Those were good times. I shouted, 'Ghost of the First Emperor of Ch'in, you'd have expected this day!'" As it happened that Monkey's mind was intent on seeking the First Emperor of Ch'in, he pretended to collapse when Hsiang Yü came out with the name and said, "Your Majesty, don't say any more. I want to sleep."

When Hsiang Yü heard Beautiful Lady Yü say she wished to sleep, what could he do but agree? He forthwith shut his mouth. They heard the guard tower drum beat "thump...thump...thump...thump...thump" – in the fifth watch. Monkey said, "Your Majesty, the last part of the story was really long. We missed the drum for the fourth watch."

Monkey laid down on the couch, and Hsiang Yü, too, laid down and shared the pillow. Monkey said to Hsiang Yü, "I can't sleep, Your Majesty."

Hsiang Yü said, "Since Beautiful Lady can't sleep, I'll tell more of the story."

Monkey said, "It's all right for you to tell stories but this time don't say such shameless words."

Hsiang Yü said, "What do you mean by *shameless words*?"

Monkey said, "There's no shame in talking about others but talking about oneself is shameless. Let me ask you where the First Emperor of Chin's now?"

Hsiang Yü said, "Ah, the First Emperor was also quite a man. Except for one thing – where other men were complacent, he was foolish."

Monkey said, "He conquered six states and built the Great Wall. He must have been an intelligent man."

Hsiang Yü said, "Beautiful Lady, one must distinguish intelligent foolishness from foolish intelligence. The First Emperor's intelligence is foolish intelligence. His Primal Celestial Excellency saw that the Emperor was intensely oblivious and didn't belong in the World of the Ancients, so he sent him to the World of Oblivion."

Monkey caught the words "World of Oblivion" but they didn't mean anything to him. He quickly asked, "How far is the World of Oblivion from here?"

Hsiang Yü said, "The World of the Future lies in between."

Monkey said, "Since it's a World of Oblivion separated from us by a World of the Future who knows that he's in the World of Oblivion?"

Hsiang Yü said, "Beautiful Lady, you don't understand. In a place called Fish-mist Village stands the Jade Gate with two doors. Inside the gate is a hidden path that leads to the World of the Future. In the World of the Future there is another hidden path that leads to the World of Oblivion. Some time ago there was a man called New Being, also known as Newly Retired Scholar. He was really brave! One day he pushed open the Jade Gate and went to the World of Oblivion, found his dad, and returned home. When he came back his hair and beard were completely white. After one visit, that Newly Retired Scholar shouldn't have made a second one but he wasn't satisfied. So three years later he again went through the Jade Gate, this time to look for his dad-in-law. Great Yü, the Dark Emperor, was furious. He didn't wait for him to return but ordered someone to put seals on the Jade Gate. When the Newly Retired Scholar came back from the World of Oblivion, and found the Jade Gate sealed, he shouted the whole day but no one answered. To the east no one received him, to the west no one cared about him. It's hard to be a man in the middle. Happily, the Newly Retired Scholar was good-natured. He's lived in the World of the Future for more than ten years now and still hasn't come home."

Monkey exclaimed, "Your Majesty, this Jade Gate is truly a wonder. I want to go see it tomorrow!"

King Hsiang said, "That's no trouble. It's only a few steps from here to Fish-mist Village."

As he was speaking, they heard the cock crow three times. Eight green silk windows turned fish-belly white as the sun slowly rose above the eastern mountains – the dawn was exhilarating. Four of Beautiful Lady Yü's maids were walking outside the window. Footsteps could be heard but no voices. Monkey yelled, "P'ing-hsiang! I want to get up."

A maid answered from outside the window, "I'll send her in." Shortly, P'ing-hsiang pushed the door and entered the room. Hsiang Yü helped Monkey up, and they sat together. Another maid rushed in and asked, "Would Your Ladyship come to Heaven's Poem Cottage to wash?"

Monkey was about to move when he had another thought and said to himself, "If I'm too hasty, I'll lose Beautiful Lady's grace."

He gently pushed open the two panels of a green silk window and picked a pomegranate flower and leaf. He fondled it in his hand, then dropped it to the mosaic pavement. Monkey turned and left, and not long afterward came to Heaven's Poem Cottage. There he saw a silver lacquer box and a box of fragrant powder on a long, exquisitely carved desk. Beside the boxes sat a jade-green crystal cup holding a peach powder puff. To the left of the silver lacquer box was a basin painted with purple flowers, in which there was a hairband. A delicate vase contained dark eyebrow paint. On the right side lay a large comb for oiling the hair and three small ones. On the left lay a set of green jade combs: five medium green jade oil combs, and five small ones. Below them were four large striped rhinoceros horn combs and four small red-stone combs. Above right was placed a delicate ice-jade bottle holding hundred-fragrance cologne. There was also 100-nipped cloud-striped jar nearly two-thirds full of alcohol for moistening the fingernails. A stone basin shaped like a square jade seal was placed above left. The basin contained clear water over several curious stones, and across the stones lay a little bamboo bristle brush. Below on the right lay four large and ten small dark and soft brushes and six human-hair brushes. Beside these last brushes lay a half-water and half-oil comb, and two combs with blunt teeth. A pair of gold tweezers, jade-inlaid scissors, a face-cleaning blade, a glass of pure rose-dew, a goblet of green rice-powder for washing hands, and a glass of jade-green fragrant oil were arranged beside an ancient bronze mirror. When Monkey saw the mirror he quickly took a look to compare himself with the real Beautiful Lady, and saw that the face in the mirror was prettier. Several maids hovered around Monkey: some fixed his hair, some changed his clothes. When the morning toilet was completed, Hsiang Yü bounded into the lodge and shouted, "Beautiful Lady! Let's go to the Jade Gate!"

Monkey was delighted. Hsiang Yü called for the sedan chair. Monkey said, "You're such a bore, Your Majesty! It's only a short walk in the shade of pines and cedars. It would be so vulgar to take a sedan chair."

Hsiang Yü bellowed, "Forget the sedan chair!"

The two of them went out hand-in-hand and before long arrived at the gate. There were no seals to be seen on it and Monkey pushed it halfway open. He thought, "If I don't go now, when will I?"

And he lunged through. Hsiang Yü was dumbfounded. He sputtered helplessly and grasped at Monkey's skirt but caught only the air and toppled forward with a thud. Monkey paid him no mind, and went on by himself. After plunging headlong through the gate, Monkey rolled on and on for several miles. In his ears he heard the cries of the King of Ch'u and the wailing of the maids. After rolling a few more miles, he could no longer hear them but he still hadn't come to the World of the Future. Monkey grew anxious and shouted, "Oh no! No! All along I've been fooling other people but now it's me who's been tricked into this bottomless well by Hsiang Yü!"

Suddenly he heard a voice beside him say, "Great Sage, don't worry. You've already come better than half way. It's only a little farther to the World of the Future."

Monkey said, "Big brother where are you?"

The voice said, "I'm right next door to you, Great Sage."

Monkey said, "Then why don't you open the door and let me come in for tea?"

The voice said, "This is No-man's World. There's no tea to drink."

Monkey said, "If it's No-man's who's that talking about No-man?"

The voice said, "Great Sage, you're so intelligent – why so dense now? I'm disembodied; in fact, I've never even been joined with a body."

When Monkey saw that no door would be opened, he grew so angry that he put all his strength into rolling, and rolled all the way down to the World of the Future. He had just stood up and taken a few steps when he encountered the Six Thieves he had first met years ago.<sup>6</sup> He snorted and said, "Bah! Time is out of joint – I'm seeing ghosts in broad daylight."

The Six Thieves yelled, "Don't run away, pretty lady. Wait 'til we strip off your clothes and take your jewels to pay for your safe conduct."

## 069

### In the World of the Future, Monkey Exterminates the 6 Thieves; As Yama<sup>1</sup> for Half a Day Monkey Judges Good and Evil

As Monkey, in the person of Beautiful Lady Yü, plunged helter-skelter through the Jade Gate, he was concentrating on reaching the World of the Future and hadn't returned to his own form. When he heard the threats of the Six Thieves, he realised this and quickly stroked his face to effect the transformation. "Take a good look at my cudgel, you thieves!" he growled.

The courage of the Six Thieves was immediately shattered. They knelt by the side of the road and wailed to Monkey for pity, "Great Sage, Nun of Mercy, we'd not have molested your Master that time under the ivy-covered tree and brought down your noble wrath. We six brothers all lay dead at once. When our spirits went into the World of the Ancients, because of our reputations as thieves, we'd not stay there. We'd only come here and rob in broad daylight to make a living. We've not done anything even half bad. We respect to you, and hope that you'll spare us."

Monkey said, "I'd spare you but you'd not have spared me."

And he brought down his cudgel and pounded the thieves into meat cakes. Then he walked away, intent on finding the hidden path. All at once a pair of boys wearing black grabbed Monkey and said, "You've come just in time, my lord Great Sage. Our King Yama took ill and died. The Jade Emperor is busy with some kind of construction work and didn't have time to send anyone – he doesn't care that the Underworld has no master. If my lord Great Sage could take charge for us for only half a day, we'd be most grateful."

Monkey thought it out. "If I waste half a day I'll be unable to see the First Emperor of Ch'in until tomorrow morning. If the Master should be killed by some monster what would I do? What could I do? I'd better send them away."

And he said, "I can do many other things but I certainly can't be a King Yama. Although I'm a very straightforward person, I can be quick-tempered at times and hurt people. If there were a charge brought to the court of the Underworld and the plaintiff turned out to be right, I might suddenly become angry and take out my cudgel and beat the defendant to pieces. In a case that wasn't clear-cut, it would be all right if there were a firm witness. But if a witness knelt forward and said, 'The plaintiff isn't quite right, and the defendant is so pitiful,' then what would I do?"

The boys wearing black said, "You're mistaken, Great Sage. The question of life and death would be in your hands. What's there to be afraid of?" Disregarding Monkey's protests, they dragged him through the Gate of Ghosts, and called out, "Let all palaces empty to welcome the true King Yama we've found!"

Monkey had no choice but to ascend the main hall. An attendant bailiff presented Monkey with the jade seal and asked him to take charge. At the foot of the stairs stood red-haired devils, green-toothed devils, and a motley group of master-less, homeless devils, numbering in all eighty million four thousand and six hundred. In the front of the hall stood seven-foot-tall bailiffs, tattooed bailiffs, chief-circuit bailiffs, fate-arbiter bailiffs, sun bailiffs, moon bailiffs, lotus bailiffs, water bailiffs, iron-faced bailiffs, white-faced bailiffs, life-suspending bailiffs, sudden-death bailiffs, treachery-penetrating bailiffs, bailiffs who help people onto the correct way, and women bailiffs, in all five million sixteen people. They presented a ledger that listed their names and saluted with, "A millennium!"

Denizens of the 9 other Halls of Hell also came to pay their respects. Monkey sent all of them from the hall. Then Bailiff Ts'ao, responsible for the Life and Death Register, knelt at the foot of the stairs and sent up the register. Monkey took it and leafed through the pages, thinking, "The other day I killed a lot of boys and girls. I wonder if they're listed here?" He turned a page and thought, "If it says that Sun Wukong beat to death several thousand boys and girls, should I cover it up or must I send a summons?"

He hadn't yet decided when it occurred to him, "Oh, that's right – when I came here before, I just crossed out the names of everyone named Sun,<sup>2</sup> and all those little monkeys still depend on my influence to keep them free from the judgement of merit and demerit. Anyway, what little devil would dare report what I do? And what little bailiff would dare write it down?"

He flipped over the pages and threw the book down the stairs. Bailiff Ts'ao held it as before and stood beside the left pillar. Monkey shouted, "Bailiff Ts'ao! Bring me a novel to help me pass the time!"

The bailiff said, "Your Honour, we're extremely busy here. You've not time to read a novel." He presented a calendar with a yellow binding and said, "Your Honour, your predecessor always followed a calendar."

Monkey opened the calendar and looked it over. Right at the beginning there was the 12<sup>th</sup> month and the first month came at the very end. Each month began with the 30<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> and ended with the first. Monkey was startled and said, "How strange! In the World of the Future the calendar runs backwards. I can't figure it out!"

He was about to summon the calendar-maker and ask him about it when a bailiff entered the hall and said, "Your Honour, tonight at court we must interrogate the recited prime minister Ch'in Kuei."<sup>3</sup>

Monkey thought, "This Ch'in Kuei must have been an evil man. If he sees me looking like a compassionate monk, why should he be afraid?" He told the bailiffs "Bring the judicial robes," and he put on the nine-tasselled mortarboard, the robe embroidered with scaly dragons and a pair of iron emotion-repelling shoes.

A tin ink-well containing vermilion ink and a copper brush-stand against which leaned two bright red brushes were placed on the table. On the left were arranged a bamboo tube holding slips on which were written the names of minor Underworld clerks, a tube containing slips with the names of all circuit bailiffs, one with the names of bailiffs presiding over courts, and three enumerating the nameless

attending devils. Monkey summoned five kinds of devil-bailiffs. First came the green-robed bailiff leading five hundred green-faced, green-skinned, green-toothed, green-fingered, green-haired devils known as “crack Ch’in-hacking devils.” Then came the yellow-turbaned bailiff leading five hundred gold-faced, gold-armoured, gold-armed, gold-headed, gold-eyed, gold-toothed “fierce Ch’in-extinguishing devils.” The red-bearded bailiff led five hundred crimson-faced, crimson-bodied, crimson-clothed, crimson-boned, crimson-biled, crimson-hearted “crack Ch’in-shaming devils.” The white-bellied bailiff led five hundred white-livered, white-lunged, white-eyed, white-bowelled, white-bodied, white-mouthed “small Ch’in-killing devils.” And finally came the dark-faced bailiff leading five hundred black-clothed, black-skirted, black-boned, black-headed, black-footed (in fact only their hearts weren’t black) devils called “good Ch’in-flogging devils.”

The devil brigades corresponded to the five colours, and, in accord with the five phases,<sup>4</sup> they stood in the five directions. They stood in five orderly groups before the Court of Fearful Ambition. Monkey also called for patrolling messengers who wore snow-white turbans and had protruding bones and sinews and black faces with coppery eyes, to guard the area beyond the screen on the east side of the hall. Another squad of patrolling messengers wearing blood-spotted turbans and having protruding bones and sinews, powder-coloured faces and trunks like elephants guarded the area beyond the western screen. Monkey placed a certain Bailiff Hsü in charge of these messengers. Then he summoned a unit of 600 grassy-haired, tattoo-faced, insect-throated, windy-eyed, iron-handed, copper-headed marshals and put Bailiff Ts’ui in charge of them. One hundred dragon-coloured devils, wearing fish clothes and having the heads and mouths of tigers and the horns and hooves of cattle, carried letters and official documents. Some male shamans wearing onion-flower hats received guests and saw them off. Two hundred devils with weedy hair rolled up the screens and swept the grounds. Also at hand there were seven hundred poets, each with nine dragon-feet and the head of a phoenix. Monkey ordered, “Little devils, raise the iron-wind flagpole.” The bailiffs passed on his command and everyone outside the screens assented in one voice. The iron pole was raised to the thundering cadence of three hundred and thirty-three drumbeats. Two great white banners flashed and showed eight characters clearly written in pure gold: “Revenge Evil, Purify Hatred, Honour the Upright, Exterminate Deviants.” Monkey watched as the flagpole was raised and had a notice issued saying:

From Sun, presiding in the main hall: The way of Heaven is vast; the law is beyond all emotion. A bailiff who adjudicates good and evil must be beyond selfishness. Whoever transgresses the law draws himself into its inexorable net. Proclaimed in this third month.

After the notice was displayed, those outside the screens shouted in unison and beat the drum another round. Monkey issued a summons tablet that read: “Ch’in Kuei.”

A bailiff knelt, received the tablet, and flew past the screen. When he hung it on the eastern pillar, there was a great commotion beyond the screen and another thundering drum round was sounded. Monkey shouted, “Roll up the screens!” Several devils rushed in and rolled up the fighting-tiger screens. All the bailiffs stood facing each other from either side of the hall in flying-goose formation and glared like eagles. From outside there came another round of drumbeats. A conch-shell was blown and cloud chimes struck. A white paper banner was brought in to the chaotic clatter of stones, and on it was written:

*The recited thief, Ch’in Kuei*

The devil-attendants at the first gate shouted, “Bring in the recited thief, Ch’in Kuei!”

Assent came in unison from outside the screen and the drum again thundered. The conch was again blown and the cloud chimes struck. In the hall a green-toothed bailiff began to sound the Deviant-eliminating Bell. There were drum rolls from the outer gate, drum rolls from the inner gate, and drum rolls from beyond the screen. Smoke billowed and the stars of the Dipper were scattered. The devils at the outer gate shouted, “Ch’in Kuei enters!” The five classes of devil bailiffs within the screen and all the devil attendants beyond the screen roared in one voice; the noise was thunderous. When the drumming ceased, Monkey gave the command, “Loosen Ch’in Kuei’s bonds! Let me question him carefully.”

1000 jobless devils of heroic spirit quickly released the ropes, dragged Ch’in Kuei down from the stone slab to which he was tied, and kicked him a few times. Ch’in Kuei crouched on the ground, not daring to make a sound. Monkey called out, “Welcome, Prime Minister Ch’in.”

**070**

**How Ch'in Kuei'd Not Redeem himself Even with 100 Bodies; the Great Sage Wholeheartedly Takes Refuge in Yüeh Fei**

The bailiff in charge of the register again presented his book of merits and demerits. Monkey looked through it and said, “Bailiff, why doesn’t the name Ch’in Kuei appear in the record?”

The bailiff answered, “Your Honour, Ch’in Kuei’s guilt is great, his evil monstrous. I didn’t dare to mix him in with the other ghosts, so I prepared a special record on him and inserted it at the back.”

Monkey flipped back the pages and took out the record of Ch’in Kuei’s evils. At the beginning it read:

The ruler of Chin, Wu-ch’i-mai, gave Ch’in Kuei to his brother Ta-lan as a hostage. When Ta-lan attacked Shan-yang, Ch’in Kuei advocated negotiations. Ta-lan thereupon released Ch’in to return home. He was accompanied by his wife nee Wang.

Monkey said, “Ch’in Kuei, after you became a minister to your emperor, you didn’t seek to elevate yourself or spread your fame. Why did you enter into collusion with Chin?”

Ch’in Kuei said, “This is nothing but the slander of the Chin people. It doesn’t have a thing to do with me.” Monkey asked a silver-faced, jade-toothed bailiff to bring a treachery-reflecting water mirror. In the mirror Ch’in Kuei was plainly seen salute before the Chin king saying, “Ten millennia.” The Chin king whispered in Kuei’s ear, and Kuei nodded his head. Ch’in Kuei whispered into the king’s ear, and the king smiled. When Ch’in Kuei was about to leave, the Chin king again whispered in his ear, and Ch’in Kuei responded, “It goes without saying! Indeed.”

Monkey was enraged. He said, “Ch’in Kuei, do you see the Ch’in Kuei in the mirror?”

Ch’in Kuei said, “But Your Honour, the Ch’in Kuei in the mirror doesn’t know the suffering of the one outside the mirror.”

Monkey said, “Soon he will know suffering.” He ordered iron-faced devils to inflict the “body covered with brambles” punishment. One hundred and fifty devils assented immediately and produced six million embroidery needles, pushing them everywhere into Ch’in Kuei’s body. Monkey continued reading:

In the first year of the Shao-hsing reign (1131), he was appointed vice-civil councillor of state. Kuei concealed his malicious intent, waiting only to attain the prime minister’s office.

Monkey threw back his head and roared with laughter. He said, “What were you waiting to do with the prime minister’s office?”

Chief Bailiff Kao said, “Today there are two kinds of people who wait for the prime ministership. One kind, the malodorous who only know how to eat and wear clothes and play with their wives and children, wait until they get the prime ministership and use it to make themselves elegant, to impress people in their home town, and to enslave and cheat others. The second is the kind who sells his country and topples the court, secretly wearing the emperor’s mortarboard crown and handing down proclamations under the royal seal. He waits until he gets the prime ministership and uses it to monopolise political power, to control the emperor, and to reward or punish as he wills. Ch’in Kuei was the latter sort.”

Monkey ordered small devils to slap Ch’in Kuei’s face. A group of red-hearted, red-haired devils all grabbed hold of Ch’in and beat him from nine in the morning till one in the afternoon. Even then they did not want to stop. Monkey shouted, “You red-hearted devils, that’s enough! There’ll be time for more beating later.” He read on:

In the eighth month he was appointed vice director of state affairs. In the ninth month Lü I-Hao again became prime minister; he and Ch’in Kuei shared power. Kuei berated Lü’s faction. Promoting internal strength and non-resistance in external affairs, he banished I-Hao to Chen-chiang. The emperor told Academician Ch’i Ch’ung-li, “Kuei wants to hand the people of Hopei over to Chin, and the people of the Central Plain to Liu Yü. If Southerners thus return to the South and Northerners to the North and I’m a Northerner – where shall I go?”

Monkey said, “The recited emperor was right. In times like this, when common folk in the mountains and valleys receive their draft notices one day and see the imperial announcement the next that of them doesn’t have a loyal heart? And you – to whom did you owe your noble rank among the Three Dukes, your ten-thousand-picul emolument, your official seal with its bright ribbons and your six-willow gate?<sup>1</sup> To whom do you owe your huge courtyard and fancy embroidery? You never thought about your emperor or repaying your country’s kindness but all the time nurtured treachery and poison. You put the emperor, high as the ninth heaven, in a position where he couldn’t protect one foot of the crossbeam in his house. Do you call this loyalty? Or treachery!”

Ch’in Kuei answered, “Although I’m stupid, I tried to protect the emperor and pacify the realm. ‘Southerners return south, and Northerners return north’ was nothing but a current joke at the time! Your Honour, you’d not take it into account.”

Monkey said, “This is no joke!” He ordered the “little dagger-mountain” brought in.

2 fierce weedy-haired devils brought out a hill-shaped device bristling with knife blades. They threw Ch’in onto it, and his body dripped with blood. Monkey said, “This is just for fun, Prime Minister Ch’in. You’d not take it into account.” And he laughed loudly. He again read:

During the eighth year (1138) he was appointed vice director of state affairs. An envoy of Chin came to negotiate peace with Wang Lun. Kuei went with the prime minister to see the emperor. Kuei alone lingered and said, “Bureaucrats are afraid of this and that. They are of no help in deciding an important matter. If Your Majesty decides to negotiate peace, I beg you to consult with me.” The emperor said, “I’ll give authority to you alone.” Kuei said, “I hope Your Majesty will consider it for three more days.”

Monkey said, “Let me ask you – if you wanted to be successful in the negotiations, a matter as urgent as wind and fire, why you wanted to wait three days? If there had been an official who was willing to spit blood and swear an oath to form a party of loyalists willing to sacrifice their lives, your plans would have been destroyed.”

Ch’in Kuei said, “Your Honour, at that time there was only Emperor Ch’in Kuei. How could there have been an Emperor Chao?? This ghostly prisoner of yours had a list of court officials that I always kept in my sleeve. If any pro-Chao official should be disrespectful and oppose me, his head would immediately disappear. Tell me, Your Honour, from the time P’an-ku created the world until it returns to Hun-tun, how many such loyalists, willing to sacrifice their lives, might there be? Even if there had been a loyalist at court then, was he going to form a party all by himself? Since no party was formed, I enjoyed peace and luxury.”

Monkey said, “Since it was like that, how did the recited emperor’s palace look to you?”

Ch’in Kuei said, “In the eyes of your ghostly prisoner, that day the hundred officials in the palace were all ants.”

Monkey ordered, “White-faced devils! Pound Ch’in Kuei into fine powder and change him into a million ants to avenge the grievance of those court officials.”

100 white-faced devils looked sharp on receiving their command. In a flash they had brought out a pestle fifty feet long and one hundred feet wide and proceeded to crush Ch’in Kuei into a peach-blossom-pink paste. As it spread on the ground, the paste transformed into tiny ants, scurrying hither and thither. Monkey ordered King Puffer’s bailiff to come and blow Ch’in Kuei back together again. He asked Ch’in Kuei, “Well, are those hundred officials ants? Or is the prime minister an ant?”

The skin on Ch’in Kuei’s face was like dirt. He only sighed. Monkey said, “Now you tell me, Ch’in Kuei, how the emperor looked to you that day?”

Ch’in replied, “When your ghostly prisoner stood in the ranks at court, I looked at the silk five-clawed dragon robe as if it were some old rag in my trunk. I looked at the mortarboard crown as if it were my frayed square cap. I saw the sun-moon fan as if it were my banana leaf, the gold imperial palace as if it were my study. I looked at the gate to the Forbidden City as if it were my bedroom door. As for His Majesty, I saw only a grass-green dragonfly dancing in a circle.”

Monkey said, “Enough! I’ll trouble you to become an emperor.”

He ordered the Barons of Light and Dark from the Board of Baleful Heaven to wash Ch’in Kuei in the Sea of Boiling Oil. They tore open his ribs and made them into 4 wings, changing him into a dragonfly. Monkey again ordered him blown back to his original form and asked, “Ch’in Kuei, may I further ask how you passed those three days of leisure?”

Ch’in Kuei replied, “How’d Ch’in Kuei have any spare time?”

Monkey said, “You’re a traitor and a thief. You didn’t have to kill barbarians in the West or beat back the Northern Tribes. You didn’t have to establish constant principles or rectify names – why didn’t you’ve any spare time?”

Ch’in Kuei said, “Your Honour, during those three days I was busy watching the officials. When I saw one with a heart that had the name ‘Ch’in’ written on it, I put a vermilion dot above his name. Large dots meant a heart on which *Ch’in* was large; small dots, a heart on which *Ch’in* was small. Later on I’d appoint the large *Ch’in* hearts to high posts while the small *Ch’in* hearts would suffer a slight reversal. Some could have been either pro-Ch’in or pro-Chao. I left their names unmarked since I planned to banish them later. If I found anyone who tended to be pro-Chao, I drew a circle by his name in thick ink. A large circle meant his guilt was great; a small circle meant little guilt. Whether an entire household was wiped out or guilt was shared only by wives and children, whether only one’s parents’ and wives’ families were exterminated or everyone within the nine degrees of relationship were cut down, all depended upon my whim.”

Monkey was furious. He shouted, “Brother Chang! Brother Teng! Why didn’t you strike him down before? You let him remain in the world to carry on like that? All right – though Lord Teng didn’t use his thunderbolts, there’s still the thunder of Lord Sun.”<sup>3</sup> He ordered ten thousand devils who were imitation thunder gods, each carrying an iron whip, to beat Ch’in Kuei till no trace of him remained. Then he again had the bailiff blow him back to his true form and once more read from the record:

Three days passed. Ch’in Kuei lingered and reported to the emperor as before. Though the emperor was beginning to agree, Kuei was afraid he would change his mind, so he said, “I wish Your Majesty would think it over three more days.” After three days the emperor decided in favour of the peace negotiations.

Monkey said, “And how did you pass those three days of leisure?”

Ch’in Kuei said, “I’d no leisure those three days either. When I went to court and saw that the recited emperor had decided in favour of peace negotiations, it was an accomplishment sweet as honey. When I left the court gates, I went directly to have a feast arranged at Copper Bird Tower to celebrate having conquered recited, bolstered Chin, and secured my own career. I was drunk the whole day, and the next day I held a great feast for the officials with ‘Ch’in hearts.’ The poems of Chin was performed, along with the ‘flying-flower sabre exercise.’ We didn’t use any recited things or say so much as half a word about it. I got good and drunk that day, too. The third day I sat alone in my Sweep-away Loyalty Study and laughed heartily all day. By night I was drunk.”

Monkey said, “You really had a fancy for juice those three days, didn't you? Well, today I've several cups of good juice to offer you, Mr. Prime Minister.” He ordered 200 drill devils to carry out a vat of human pus and pour it into Ch'in Kuei's mouth. Monkey threw back his head and roared with laughter. He said, “The first emperor of recited, T'ai-tsu, suffered to win the empire. Ch'in Kuei gladly gave it away.”

Ch'in Kuei said, “I'm not glad about this human pus juice today. Ah, Your Honour, there will be many Ch'in Kueis in the future – even today their number is not small. Why is it only I who must suffer?” Monkey said, “Who asked you to be the teacher of today's Ch'in Kueis and the model for future ones?” He ordered the crack gold-clawed devils to bring a saw, tie Ch'in Kuei down, and saw him into ten thousand pieces. From the side, King Puffer's bailiff quickly blew him back together. Monkey again read the ledger: After peace negotiations were decided upon, Ch'in Kuei'd the Chin people in his power and made himself formidable. Monkey said, “When you had the Chin people in your power, how many hundred catties did they weigh?” Ch'in Kuei said, “When I'd them in my power they were as heavy as an iron Mount T'ai.” Monkey said, “Do you know how many catties Mount T'ai weighs?” Ch'in Kuei said, “Probably ten million catties.”

Monkey said, “Your guess is off – you can weigh it yourself.” He ordered five thousand copper-boned devils to bring out an iron Mount T'ai and press it on Ch'in Kuei's back. 2 hours later, they pushed it aside for a look. They saw a flat Ch'in Kuei, changed into flakes of mud. Monkey ordered him blown back together so he could continue the interrogation. He read: The recited generals reported victories in every campaign but Kuei demanded retreat. In the ninth month he ordered the recall of generals from all fronts.

Monkey asked, “Did those generals return on flying horses or did they walk back to court?” A bailiff reported, “They naturally returned on flying steeds, Your Honour.” Monkey ordered the bailiff in charge of transformations to change Ch'in Kuei into a dappled dragon horse. Several hundred fierce devils rode him and beat him. After an hour Monkey ordered him blown back to his original form and went on reading: 1 day he managed to get twelve gold imperial tablets ordering the retreat of Yüeh Fei. After Fei returned, all the territory he had recovered was soon lost again. Fei repeatedly requested to be put in command of the army but was refused. The Chin general Wu-chu sent Kuei a letter and he agreed to its contents. Because Grand Master of Remonstrance Mo-ch'i Hsieh bore a grudge against Fei, Ch'in Kuei goaded Hsieh into impeaching him. Ch'in further instructed Chang Chun to impeach Wang Kuei and lured Wang Chün into bringing false charges against Chang Hsien, saying that the latter plotted for the recall of Fei's army. Kuei ordered a messenger to arrest Yüeh Fei and his son as witnesses against Chang Hsien. Ch'in Kuei ordered Ho Chu to interrogate Yüeh Fei. Fei's robe at one moment fell open, showing the words “perfect loyalty to repay one's country” etched deep into the skin of his back. Ho Chu saw no evidence to support the charge and declared him innocent. Ch'in Kuei then shifted the commission to Mo-ch'i Hsieh. After Hsieh had held the office for a little over a month, Yüeh Fei was sentenced to prison. Thus, due to many false testimonies, Yüeh Fei was executed. He was 39 at that time. Monkey called out, “Ch'in Kuei, how did you feel about General Yüeh's case?” He hardly finished speaking when he saw a hundred Ch'in Kueis salute at the foot of the steps, wailing and weeping. Monkey shouted, “Ch'in Kuei, one body is enough for you. Where would the house of recited get a hundred empires?”

Ch'in Kuei said, “Your Honour, the other things were all right. But when you bring up the case of Lord Yüeh, your ghostly prisoner hasn't enough skin to bear the punishment. If I'm asked about it, I'll not have enough words with which to answer. I'm afraid a hundred bodies are too few.” Monkey ordered each bailiff from all the lower courts to take away one Ch'in Kuei and interrogate and torture him. At once ninety-nine Prime Minister Ch'ins were dispersed to various places. From this side came the cry, “The case of Lord Yüeh has nothing to do with me!” From that side came, “Your Honour, be good. Spare your ghostly prisoner one stroke.” Monkey was pleased. He turned to the bailiffs before his bench and remarked dryly, “I suppose that no criminal law was applied to this case here before?” Bailiff Ts'ao didn't dare reply but presented a number of documents for Monkey to look through. He opened them and found they were files from the lower courts of the Underworld. On the first sheet was written: Court of Yen: Ch'in Kuei'd the nature of “Blue Flies.”<sup>4</sup> He plotted the execution of a whole family. Yüeh Fei'd moral principles white as snow and enhanced the brilliance of the Yellow Banner.<sup>5</sup> Kuei'd be called “stupid thief,” and Fei, “perfect patriot.” Monkey said, “This is too lenient. The word ‘stupid’ is not adequate for Ch'in Kuei.” The second file read: Court of Li: Ch'in Kuei's accusation reached an impasse; the “Sorrow of Ch'u” makes one sad.<sup>6</sup> Monkey said, “This is ridiculous! The crimes of the thief Ch'in are beyond counting and this bailiff takes the time to polish his lines. That proves that 'literary men have difficulty judging a case.' No need to finish it.” And he opened the 3<sup>rd</sup> file:

Court of Tang: An Elegy to General Yüeh *who issued the 3-word condemnation (there's no need for proof) that shattered this Great Wall of ten thousand miles? Gaze northward: True, it's worthy of tears; on southern branches in vain the magpies linger. The country followed him in destruction: prime minister and enemies rose at once. As the sun sets, the pine-wind rises; still heard, the clash of sword and spear.*

Monkey said, “Here's a poem that cuts through iron and nails.” And he called out, “Ch'in Kuei, in Lord Tang's poem the five-character line ‘Prime minister and enemies arose at once’ can be called a ‘five-word condemnation.’ How would it be if I make it match your *three-word condemnation*? Just now however, I don't care about your *three-word condemnation*, nor will I use Lord Tang's *five-word condemnation*. I myself have a one-word condemnation.”

A bailiff said, “What is the one-word condemnation, Your Honour?”

Monkey said, “Hack!” He immediately ordered a hundred weedy-haired devils to bring out a furnace and forge twelve golden tablets. Outside the screen the drum was beaten three hundred and thirty-three strokes. Countless green-faced long-fanged devils charged in and grabbed hold of Ch'in Kuei. First they hacked him into sections like fish scales, then cut them off piece by piece and threw them in the furnace. When the fish-scale chopping was finished, Monkey shouted, “Principal Bailiff of Orthodox Records, destroy the first gold tablet!” Having done this, the bailiff reported in a loud voice, “Your Honour, the first gold tablet ordering the recall of General Yüeh has been destroyed!” The drum was beaten another thunderous round. From the left fierce red-bodied devils jumped out, each carrying a knife with which to hack Ch'in Kuei. The slices they made looked like lines in ice. Monkey again shouted, “Principal Bailiff of Orthodox Records, destroy the second gold tablet!” The bailiff followed the order and reported loudly, “The second gold tablet ordering the recall of General Yüeh is destroyed!” With another round of drumbeats, ten eyeless, mouthless, blood-faced crimson devils emerged from the east, each carrying a knife with which to hack at Ch'in Kuei. They slashed him into snowflakes. When the bailiff had destroyed the next tablet he reported, “The third gold tablet ordering the recall of General Yüeh is destroyed.” The drum was beaten another round. Suddenly a drum sounded from the outer gate. A little fish-clothed devil carried in a large red card which he presented to Monkey who opened it and read it over. Five words were written on the card saying, “Salutations from recited General Fei.”

When Bailiff Ts'ao saw this he immediately produced a scroll containing facts about all the officials in history. Monkey looked through it carefully, and noted the information on Yüeh Fei. The drum was again beaten at the outer gate and gold reed-pipes blew outside the screen. Both were played loudly for an hour. A general strode forward and Monkey quickly descended from the main hall. He saluted with hands clasped and said, “Welcome, General.” After they had climbed the stairs he again saluted deeply with hands clasped. They had just entered within the screens when dear Monkey again did obeisance and said, “Master Yüeh, your disciple's had two masters. The first was the Patriarch SuAwakening;<sup>8</sup> the second was the Tang Priest. Today I've met you, General, my third master, and the Three Teachings<sup>9</sup> are complete within me.”

General Yüeh demurred repeatedly but Monkey was insistent. He continued to salute and said, “General Yüeh, today your disciple's a cup of juice to set your heart at ease.” General Yüeh said, “Thank you very much, disciple but I fear I'll be unable to drink it.” Then Monkey wrote a letter and looked around, saying “Where are the little devils who carry letters?” A group of ox-headed tiger-horned devils knelt all at once and said, “What is Your Honour's order?” Monkey said, “I want you to go up to Heaven.”

An ox-head replied, “Your Honour, how can a bunch of sunken devils go up to Heaven?” Monkey said, “It's just that you don't have a way of getting there. Going to Heaven is really no problem.” Taking out a piece of paper he changed it into a lucky cloud and gave the letter to the ox-head. Then he remembered, “The day before yesterday the door to Heaven was closed tight. I wonder if it's open today?” He said, “Ox-head, go on this lucky cloud. If you find the door to Heaven closed just say you've a letter from the Underworld for Tushita Palace.”<sup>10</sup>

After Monkey had sent the ox-head off, he said, “Master Yüeh, your disciple is most happy. I'll complete a verse for you.” General Yüeh said, “Disciple, I've spent years on horseback. I've never read a single line of scripture or spoken Ch'an words. How can I give you a *verse* to complete?” Monkey said, “Listen, Master, and I'll complete one anyway: *for your ruler, perfect your loyalty; as an official, repay your country. Everyone is the King of Heaven; <sup>11</sup>everyone's a god.*” Monkey had just finished reciting when he saw the ox-headed devil carrying a return letter. Ox-head landed on the stairs with a gold and purple calabash on his head. Monkey asked, “Was the gate of Heaven closed?”

The ox-head replied, “Heaven's gate was wide open.” He presented Lao-tzu's reply. It read: The Jade Emperor is overjoyed at the Great Sage's interrogation of Ch'in Kuei: every word was true, every beating appropriate. I present you with this gold calabash – avoid using a drill on it! I hope the Great Sage will be careful. As for the business of sky gouging, it's a very long story. I'll tell you about it when we meet. Monkey read the letter and laughed loudly. He said, “The time I was in Lotus Flower Cave, I'd not have drilled open his treasure.<sup>12</sup> Now the old man's being sarcastic.” He saluted toward General Yüeh with hands clasped and said, “Please sit a little while, Master, and allow me to prepare the blood juice.”

### 071 Monkey Returns to the Tower of Myriad Mirrors; in the Palace of Creeping Vines Wukong Saves Himself

Monkey took the calabash in his hand and asked a bailiff to stand beside him. He whispered something into the bailiff's ear – we don't know what – and handed him the calabash. The bailiff went to the foot of the stairs, then jumped into the air shouting, “Ch'in Kuei! Ch'in Kuei!” By then Kuei's heart was dead and his breath alone remained. This gave forth a sound of acknowledgment and was instantaneously sucked into the calabash. Monkey saw this and shouted, “Bring it here! Bring it here!” The bailiff hurried inside the screen and gave the calabash to Monkey. Monkey pasted a seal reading “Quickly follow the orders of most high Lao-tzu,” on the mouth of the calabash. An hour and forty-five minutes later, Ch'in Kuei was transformed into a bloody fluid. Monkey ordered a bailiff to bring out a gold-claw cup. He tipped the calabash and poured out the blood; then, kneeling, he offered the cup with both hands to General Yüeh saying, “Master, drink of Ch'in Kuei's blood juice.” General Yüeh waved it away and wouldn't drink. Monkey said, “Don't be silly, Master Yüeh. You'd only hate the thief who stole recited – you needn't pity him.” General Yüeh said, “I don't pity him.” Monkey said, “If you don't pity him, why not have a mouthful of juice?” General Yüeh said, “You don't realise, disciple, that if a man on earth were to drink even half a mouthful of that thief and traitor's blood and flesh, his stomach would stink for ten millennia.” Seeing Master Yüeh steadfastly refuse to drink, Monkey called a red-hearted devil and gave it to him. The red-hearted devil drank it and went to the back of the hall. An hour later there was suddenly a great commotion in front of the gate. The gate-keeper beat the cry-treachery drum. At the foot of the stairs the devils of five colours standing in rank in the five directions and the bailiffs of all courts of the five directions braced for action. Monkey was about to ask a bailiff what was going on when he saw that three hundred weedy-haired devils were already huddled at the foot of the white jade stairs holding the head of a blue-toothed, green-eyed, crimson-haired, red-bearded bailiff. They reported, “Your Honour, as soon as the red-hearted devil drank Ch'in Kuei's blood juice, his face changed. He ran into the Purple Palace of Destiny, pulled a dagger from his belt, and stabbed to death his benevolent master, the Arbiter of Destiny. Then he ran through the Gate of Ghosts and was reincarnated.” Monkey shouted for the devils to go away. Then General Yüeh arose. From beyond the screen came three hundred and thirty-three beats of the drum and gentle strains of poems. Lances and blades cracked; swords and spears were thick as a forest. Fifty thousand chief bailiffs respected to send off Lord Yüeh. Monkey said to them, “Arise and leave us.” The chief bailiffs responded to the order and retired to their own courts. Then countless fierce green-blooded, red-muscl'd devils saluted themselves to send off Lord Yüeh. Monkey told them, “Arise and leave us.”

300 upholding-righteousness yellow-toothed devils raised precious spears and shouted, “Farewell, Lord Yüeh!” Monkey commanded, “Yellow-toothed devils, you’ll escort Lord Yüeh to his residence!” Monkey and Yüeh Fei walked to the outer gate. Another round of drumbeats was sounded and the poems of the gold reed-pipes trilled. Monkey saluted with clasped hands and accompanied General Yüeh to the Gate of Ghosts. The drum thundered another round. Ten thousand devils shouted with one voice and Monkey saluted deeply with hands clasped to see General Yüeh through the gate. He said loudly, “When you’ve some free time, Master, I’ll come to receive instruction.” Saluting with hands clasped once more, he finally saw Master Yüeh off. Immediately he leapt into the air and threw the mortarboard, the entwining-dragon robe, the pair of iron emotion-repelling shoes, and the square jade seal of King Yama down onto the Gate of Ghosts and left.

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It is said that in Shantung Province there was a restaurant whose manager had lost all his hair and teeth. No one knew how many hundreds of years old he might be. All day long he sat in his shop and sold food. His sign said, “This is the Restaurant of the New Ancient.” Beneath this a line of small characters read, “Original name: Newly Retired Scholar.” When the Newly Retired Scholar returned from the World of Oblivion, he had found the Jade Gate tightly closed and couldn’t pass through to the World of the Ancients. Consequently, he stayed in the World of the Future and opened a restaurant to pass his days. But he was a man unwilling to forget his roots, so he changed his name to the New Ancient. That particular day he was sitting in his shop drinking tea when he saw Monkey running heavily from the east, shouting, “What a stench! What a terrible stench!”

The New Ancient said, “Good day, Sir.”

Monkey stopped. “And who are you that you dare to call me *Sir*?”

The New Ancient said, “I’m an ancient contemporary and a contemporary ancient. If I told you who I’m you’d just laugh at me.”

Monkey said, “Go ahead and tell me, I’ll not laugh.”

The New Ancient said, “I’m the Newly Retired Scholar who used to live in the World of the Ancients.”

When he heard this, Monkey made a quick salute with clasped hands and said, “My new benefactor! If it hadn’t been for your help, I’d have had a hard time getting through the Jade Gate.”

The New Ancient was startled, so Monkey told him his name and recounted the whole story. The New Ancient laughed and said, “Well, Mr. Sun, you still owe me a respect then.”

Monkey said, “Don’t joke about it. I’ve something important to ask you. What’s causing this stench? It’s not quite dead fish; then again it’s not the smell of sheep either.”

The New Ancient said, “If you want rankness, this is the place to come; if not, stay away. We’re right next to the Tartars here. If you walk around for a while, your whole body will become rank, too.”

When Monkey heard this, he thought, “I’m covered all over with hair. If I become polluted with this smell, I’ll be a rank ape. What’s more, I was just King Yama and interrogated a certain Ch’in Kuei into one thousand bits and ten thousand pieces. Come to think of it, the First Emperor of Ch’in was a Ch’in, and Ch’in Kuei was a Ch’in. If Kuei wasn’t his descendant, he was surely of the same clan – so the First Emperor will surely hold a grudge against me, and won’t easily let go of the Mountain-removing Bell. If I were to get rough and steal it, I’m afraid I’d ruin my reputation. Better to ask the Newly Retired Scholar a question, then leap out of this mirror.” He said, “New Benefactor, do you know how I can get to the Emerald Green World?”

The New Ancient said, “The way you came is the way to go.”

Monkey said, “What slippery Ch’an talk! I know the way I came – rolling from the World of the Ancients down to the World of the Future was easy. But rolling up from the World of the Future to the World of the Ancients will be tough.”

The New Ancient said, “If that’s your problem, follow me. Come on!”

He took Monkey with one hand and dragged him along until they came to a pool of blue water. Without uttering a word the New Ancient pushed Monkey and splash! He fell right back into the Tower of Myriad Mirrors. Monkey looked around wondering which mirror to leap into. Afraid of wasting time and delaying his master, he turned about, hoping to descend from the tower but a long search for stairs proved futile. He became anxious and pushed open a pair of sapphire windows. Outside the windows was a maze of exquisite crimson railings arrayed like cracks in ice. Luckily the spaces between supports were rather wide, and Monkey hunched up and scurried through one. Who’d have thought fate was against him, that the time was wrong, or that railings could catch one up? What were clearly railings arranged like cracks in ice suddenly became hundreds of red threads that tangled about Monkey so he couldn’t move an inch. Monkey changed into a pearl and the red threads became a pearl-net. When Monkey couldn’t roll through he instantly changed into a blue-bladed sword. The red threads became a scabbard. Monkey had no choice but to return to his own form. He cried, “Master where are you? Don’t you know your disciple is in a lot of trouble?”

And his tears fell like water from a spring. Suddenly there was a flash before his eyes and an old man appeared in the air. Saluting Monkey with his clasped hands he asked, “What’re you doing here, Great Sage?”

After Monkey had moaned the reasons, the old man said, “You don’t realise that this is the palace of Little Moon King in the Emerald Green World. Once he was a student of mine. Later when he became a king, he spent his days in dissipation. He built thirteen palaces, corresponding to the thirteen classics. This is the Sixty-four Hexagram Palace.<sup>1</sup> When you became confused, you walked directly into the Palace of Entangling Vines of the hexagram Oppression<sup>2</sup> and were bound tight. I’ll loosen the red threads for you and let you go search for your Master.”

With tears in his eyes Monkey said, “If you can do this, Elder, I’ll never be able to thank you enough.”

The old man straightaway snapped the red threads one by one with his hands. Monkey, at last free, saluted very low and asked, “What is your name, Elder? When I see God, I’ll register a great merit for you.”

The old man said, “Great Sage, I’m called Sun Wukong.”

Monkey said, “I’m called Sun Wukong, and you’re called Sun Wukong, too. How can one Ledger of Merit have two Sun Wukongs? Why don’t you tell me what you usually do for a living so I can remember a few facts about you?”

The old man said, “You ask me what I do? I’m afraid it’s enough to scare a person to death! Five centuries ago I wanted to seize the Heavenly Palace and situate myself there. The Jade Emperor made me Groom of the Heavenly Stables. Great Sage Equal to Heaven – that’s me. I suffered a bit beneath Five Phases Mountain – suffered a bit until the Tang Priest came. I followed him seeking the ‘true fruit.’ There was danger and misfortune along the road to the Western Paradise. I chanced upon the Emerald Green World and have been hiding here ever since.”

Monkey was furious and said, “You rascally six-eared ape!<sup>3</sup> Have you come to trick me again? Take a look at my cudgel!”

He pulled his cudgel from his ear and swung it down in front of him. The old man drew in his sleeves and left. He called back, “This is what’s called saving oneself! Too bad you’re unreal! Unreal! ... Unreal! ...” A beam of gold light struck Monkey’s eyes, and the old man’s form vanished. Only then did Monkey realise that the apparition had been his own true spirit. He quickly made a big salute thank himself.

## 072

### Reading Accounts Before the Palace of the Hexagram of Limitation; Collecting Hairs on the Crest of the Hill of Grief

When Monkey had finished thanking himself, he jumped down from the tower and walked to a gate. Above the gate hung a stone tablet inscribed with three large characters: “Limitation Hexagram Palace.” A purple and gold rope with a limitation hexagram carved from green jade dangling at its end hung from the door-post. The gate had two doors. Water ripples were painted on one and the other was painted with rivers and marshes. On either side of the doors were pasted *spring couplet* written on cloud-swirl paper. The couplet said:

*Don’t leave the gate, do not leave the door: danger on earth, danger in heaven.*

*For the youngest daughter, mouth, and tongue: limit sweet and bitter.<sup>1</sup>*

After Monkey had finished reading, he made to go right in but stopped in his tracks and thought, “Since this Emerald Green World has things like red threads that entangle people, I can’t go just anywhere. First I’ll take a look around this gate and see what I can find out. Then I can look for the old monk.” He turned and walked through the gate’s east side-door. Inside, a notice was pasted on a slanting wall. It said:

*Grand Total of Wages for the Carpenters, Masons, and Miscellaneous Workers Who Built Limitation Hexagram Palace Limitation’s Halls:*

*Hexagram Main Palace – 64 large and small halls. Carpenters: 16000 ounces silver. Masons: 18001 ounces silver. Miscellaneous: 54060 ounces silver and 7 cash only.*

*Creative<sup>2</sup> – 64 chambers. The day before yesterday a sworn brother of Little Moon King who, though 30 or 40 years of age, had neither been capped<sup>3</sup> nor married, acquired a wife named Lady Green-twine through Little Moon King. The ceremony was held in the third palace. Having been married only one night, they suddenly started a row. Little Moon King was enraged. He ordered me to come in for punishment – fifty strokes of the board. This came about because all the workmen got me into trouble. Just for that I’m cutting their salary to one-sixth. Carpenters only deserve 50000 ounces silver. Masons only deserve 40000 ounces silver. Miscellaneous only deserve 200000 ounces silver.*

*Receptive – 64 chambers. Carpenters, masons, and miscellaneous paid as above.*

*Peace – 406 White Crane Chambers. Little Moon King especially praised the Little Lotus Lodge. Each labourer receives an increase of 500 ounces that brings the total to: Carpenters: 7000000 ounces silver. Masons: 664 ounces silver. Miscellaneous: 2008000 ounces silver only.*

*Stagnation (Little Moon King’s sleeping quarters) 15000 Sky-blue Chambers. Little Moon King wanted to add a mirror tower but recently several additional worlds have emerged: a small 1, the World of Current Literature, broke off from the Headache World; a Red Garment World broke off from the World of Wild Herbs; and a Book-burning World broke off from the Lotus Flower World. There are countless other new split-off worlds as well. The oppressive Tower of Myriad Mirrors of the hexagram Oppression cannot contain them all. Therefore, he had no choice but to build a second Tower of Myriad Mirrors here. Tomorrow all workers will come and begin construction. Everyone must be diligent but not overly hasty or he will find himself in trouble. First however, payment for the last job will be made as follows: Carpenters: 5005000 ounces silver. Masons: 40000000 ounces silver. Miscellaneous: 1800000 ounces silver and 8 cash, 5 and 1/10 cents only.*

Monkey read until his eyes grew tired, though a list of sixty other palaces followed after. So adopting a Huai-su<sup>4</sup> method, he took in the rest at a single glance. When he had finished he was afraid and said, “I’ve seen the Heavenly Palace and the Isle of P’eng,<sup>5</sup> too. But I’ve never seen anything like this Sixty-four Hexagram Palace. Now sixty-four hexagrams are not a great number but each hexagram also contains sixty-four palaces. Sixty-four times sixty-four is still a small number but each of those again has sixty-four palaces. And this place is not the only one – there are twelve more besides. It’s hard to imagine seeing it all with my eyes – it’s weird enough to be a dream.”

He thought of a plan right away. He plucked a handful of hairs from his body, chewed them into tiny pieces, and commanded, “Change!” The hairs became countless little monkeys who stood huddled together. Monkey barked orders at them: “If you come upon something worth looking at, stop and look it over. Then report to me at once. Don’t dawdle!”

The little monkeys ran east, west, south, and north, jumping and dancing. After Monkey sent them off, he went for a leisurely stroll, and came to the crest of the Hill of Grief. He raised his head and saw a little boy carrying a letter. As the boy walked he grumbled, “Man! You’re ridiculous, Boss! What’s so special about you that you can cause so many problems? Now I’ve got to carry another letter to that old official Wang the Fourth. The other day it didn’t matter but this afternoon Mr. Ch’en is drinking and watching a play in our Drinking Rainbow Pavilion, and I’ll be unable to stick around because of your little matter!”

When Monkey heard that the Master was in Drinking Rainbow Pavilion he wanted to turn around and go looking for him. But he thought better about it and said, “If I just walk to the east or west, I might blunder onto the wrong road. It’d be better to ask that boy.” And he said, “Young Master...”

The boy was walking along, talking to himself, and hadn’t raised his head or noticed Monkey. Who would have thought that when he suddenly saw Monkey, blood would flow from the seven apertures of his head. He dropped to the ground unconscious. Monkey laughed and said, “Good boy, you know how to play dead. Let me see about this letter you’re carrying.” He quickly took the letter, and when he opened it he saw written on 2 sheets of coarse yellow paper:

Head Foreman in Charge of the 13 Palaces, Shen Ching-nan offers these words for the information of Your Honour, Old Official Wang the 4<sup>th</sup>:

Though I’m worthless, Your Honour’s looked with favour upon me and promoted me to head foreman. I didn’t know that a thief of thieves had caused Your Honour worry. Even I wish to cultivate the purity of my worthless name. Hasn’t all my behaviour for the past several years been virtuous? Yesterday however, Foreman Yü suddenly reported that items totalling over 100 have disappeared from the Sixty-four Hexagram Palace, the Palace of Three Hundred Odes, and the Palace of the 18 Poems. His Majesty Little Moon King was very angry. Tomorrow he will commission you, Old Official Wang the Fourth, to inspect and take an inventory of the palaces one by one. I believe Your Honour is kind-hearted. Even if I didn’t tell you, you’d take care of everything. Yet I still fear my heart won’t be clean but will suffer from this grievance for a century. If your Honour can make a good beginning and end of this matter, I’d be grateful for the rest of my life. I, Shen Ching-nan, your student, attendant to your intimate instructions, and head foreman of 13 palaces, salute 100 salutes. To the Old Official, Old Dad, Old Master and Lord, Wang the 4<sup>th</sup>.

Monkey was determined to find his Master. When he had finished reading he shook his body to call back his hairs. A little monkey came flying up the hill and shouted, “Great Sage! Great Sage! So you’ve come here! I’ve been looking for you a long time.”

Monkey said, “What have you seen?”

The little monkey said, “I came to a fairy cave where I saw a white deer speaking.”

Meanwhile, two little monkeys were fighting their way up the hill, yanking each other's fur and tugging each other's ears. They knelt down together in front of Monkey. One of them said that the other little monkey ate one more double-flowering peach than he had. The other said the first plucked one more plum than he had. Monkey let out a roar and the three of them jumped back onto his body at once. A while later another group of little monkeys came from the northeast. Some said what they had seen was interesting, some said what they had seen was not. 1 reported having seen 2 lines written on a wall:

*The mind follows flowing water; it stops at the blue hills.  
When I see the fallen flowers are gone, I know that spring's departed.*

Another said that a mortal stood on each leaf of a spiral bush. Each mortal held a pair of fish-shaped castanets and recited loudly to himself: "*Return to me the thing-less self, the self-less things. The Void's host; things and I are all guests.*"

A little monkey said, "The clouds in a fairy cave all formed a tapestry of palindromes."

Another little monkey reported, "I saw a high pavilion made of *garu*-wood."

A third said, "There was an ancient fairy cave with its door shut tight. They wouldn't let me in."

A fourth said, "I found a green bamboo fairy cave but it was very dark and deep and I was scared to go in."

Monkey didn't have the patience to listen. He gave his body a shake and the hundred million monkeys jumped onto his body with the sound "ting-tung, ting-tung." Monkey picked up his feet to walk away but he heard the hairs on his body say, "Don't go, Great Sage. We've a friend who hasn't returned yet."

Monkey stopped. He saw one last little monkey drunkenly climbing the hill from the southwest. Monkey asked him, "Where did you go?"

The monkey replied, "I was walking close to a tower where there was a girl of just sixteen with a face like peach blossoms. When she saw me outside her window she grabbed me and pulled me in. We sat shoulder-to-shoulder and she poured juice in my mouth till I was drunk as mud."

Monkey was enraged. He clenched his fist in front of the little monkey and beat and scolded him wildly. He said, "You dog! I let you go for a minute and you get tangled up with the Demon of Desire!" That monkey wailed, wept, and could do nothing but jump onto Monkey's body. Having then gathered all his hairs, Monkey descended the Hill of Grief.

073

**The Tears of the Tang Priest Fall i n the Palace of Crying Ospreys<sup>1</sup>; a Young Girl Plucks the Pipa<sup>2</sup> & tells a Tale**

Monkey picked up his feet and walked to a tower pavilion that clearly seemed to be the Drinking Rainbow Pavilion. But he didn't see his Master, and his heart became anxious. He turned to look out over an expanse of blue water, in the middle of which stood a water palace. Two men wearing square cloth caps sat in the palace. Monkey was suspicious and quickly scampered up a hill near the tower. He hid in a fold of the hill and looking carefully, spied four elegantly done green characters on the building that read:

Crying Ospreys Water Palace

The bright walls were colourful as tapestries; the ornamented grounds followed a design. There were cinnamon timbers and orchid rafters, plum-wood beams and orchid chambers. The railings that surrounded the palace were randomly decked with coral. Because they had been there many years, blue-green water weeds had grown around them to make patterns like the spidery characters on an old bronze. As for the two men in the palace, one wore a nine-flowered *T'ai-flower*<sup>3</sup> cap, and the other man wore a fashionable *Tung-t'ing*<sup>4</sup> cap. The one wearing a nine-flowered cap had a fair complexion, red lips, fine eyebrows, and white teeth. Except for his cap he looked just like the Tang Priest. Monkey was at once startled and pleased. He thought, "The man in the nine-flowered cap is obviously my Master but why is he wearing a cap? Little Moon King doesn't *look* like a monster."

He was confused, his mind tied in knots. Just as he was about to present himself and drag his Master away, he thought, "Suppose the Master's heart has been turned. There'll be no use in going to the West."

He remained hidden in the fold of the hill, and fixed his eyes for another look, hoping to find out whether this really was his Master. Below he saw the man in the *Tung-t'ing* cap say to the other, "The evening clouds are magnificent. Get up, Mr. Ch'en – we'll take a walk."

The capped Tang Priest said, "Please, you first, Little Moon-King." The 2 of them walked hand-in-hand to the Pavilion of Dripping Desire. In the pavilion were several scrolls, all of them paintings and calligraphy by famous artists. On the side hung a small scroll with characters written in green:

*Green mountains encircle the neck; a white stream pierces the heart.  
Where's the jade lady? In the empty sky, a white cloud.*

The 2 of them strolled a short way and heard muffled voices from a bamboo grove. The Tang Priest leaned on a railing and listened. A gust of wind in the pines carried the words of a poem:

*The crescent moon illumines several regions; many families are happy, many are sad.  
Some dwell behind jade-tasselled, gold-hooked bed-curtains; some float in rainy-night boats on the rivers Hsiao and Hsiang.*

Midnight – a girl beats her coverlet; "Why did you leave me? Why didn't you stay? If by the third watch tomorrow I've not seen you, I'll cut up this quilt embroidered with love birds."

When the Tang Priest heard this, he nodded his head and his tears fell. Little Moon King said, "I think you've been away from home too long, Mr. Ch'en. Hearing this poem's made you sad. Let's go to the Tower that Punctures Blue Heaven to hear a story recited."

The two of them chatted for a while, then left the Pavilion of Dripping Desire and disappeared. Why do you think they disappeared? It happened that the Tower that Punctures Blue Heaven was separated from the Water Palace of Crying Ospreys by a thousand chambers. Everywhere the eye could see trails of flowers encircled the eaves. Green trees arched over crisscrossed paths – a thousand drooping willows and *t'ung* trees a hundred feet tall. The two men made their way along the paths, and, as Monkey sat hidden in the fold of a hill opposite how could he see them?

2 hours later he suddenly made out the same nine-flower-capped Tang Priest and *Tung-t'ing*-capped Little Moon King sitting across from each other in two armchairs in the tower. Before them was a green striped pot filled with tea and two square Han dynasty-style tea mugs. Three blind girls sat on a low couch. One was called Ko-ch'iang-flower, another Mo-tan-lang, and the third Pei-chuan-p'ing-t'ing. Though blind, they were very pretty. Each held a *Pipa* pressed against her jade-white breast. Little Moon King said, "Ko-ch'iang-flower, how many stories can you recite?"

Ko-ch'iang-flower said, "Your Majesty, there was much suffering in the past but there will be less in the future. There are many, many stories. All that matters is which one Mr. Ch'en would like to hear."

Little Moon King said, "Mr. Ch'en is actually familiar with many stories. Why don't you name the ones you know?"

Ko-ch'iang-flower said, "There's no need to mention the old stories, I'll only name the new ones. There are 'Warm Chats in Jade Hall,' 'The Sad Story of Following the Ways of Heaven,' and 'The Tale of the Western Journey.'"

Little Moon King said, "*The Tale of the Western Journey's* new. That's the one! Recite that one!" The girls agreed. They strummed their *Pipas* and recited in full voice. A poem says:

*Don't drink while flutes and poems overflow the painted hall: only in old age can 1 believe that life's a long dream.  
Now I've made a secret compact with my heart as I peacefully gaze at a stick of incense in my hushed study.*

Ko-ch'iang-flower plucked 27 verses of the sad *Pipa* poem. She recited in a remote and penetrating voice:

*The day Heaven's emperor spread out the stars,<sup>5</sup>9 constellations and 5 regions, he set up the cosmos.  
Shooting the sun and pursuing clouds were marks of an earlier era;<sup>6</sup>fish-scale clouds, pearl-drop rain arrayed in a hundred forms.  
Wu-Huai's silver bamboo had many fantastic joints; King Ko-t'ien's auspicious leaves were congealed fragrance.<sup>7</sup>  
Dragon and snake<sup>8</sup> – mind-pictures handed down on green tablets; crow and rabbit<sup>9</sup> – signatures inscribed on jade ice.  
Don't mention the mountains' mien or words on stone or talk about the old men on Sung-feng road.<sup>10</sup>  
A jade sank in the Western Sea wrapped in a flowered tapestry.  
Upright officials were rewarded in the Palace of Precious jade.  
Hsü Yu fled the emperor's dragon robe<sup>11</sup> and the empire was proffered to Lord Yü Shun.<sup>12</sup>  
In the 14<sup>th</sup> year, the calamity of bells and stone chimes and in time the elder from Tung-t'ing Lake ruled the people.<sup>13</sup>  
Tang the Successful prayed at Mulberry Grove;<sup>14</sup>tears sprinkled pearled sleeves on Deer Terrace.<sup>15</sup>  
Rain banner and wind axe opened a pure world; on Kou-Chen Rampart<sup>16</sup> King Wu's Chou's founded.  
For the Wu King stones of spring and autumn times, lament<sup>17</sup> for she who sharpened a clasp in the Warring States, grieve.<sup>18</sup>  
White their robes and hats for Yen's champion; red in the sky the bold heart of the prince.<sup>19</sup>  
Ting, ting the dulcimer, mode changed from Chih to Yü; flying clouds on River I 10000 layers deep.  
6 states died when the plot against Chin failed;<sup>20</sup>then for the first time emperor's carved upon a stone.<sup>21</sup>  
Who'd have thought there'd be only 3 Chin emperors? Mermaid candles burned away, the Eastern Sea grew dim.  
Sad the lament for the stallion and the beautiful lady<sup>22</sup> having just lifted mountains, he wept in the autumn wind.  
The 4 White-hairs of firm resolve<sup>23</sup> sat on the empty mountain; the tireless Chang Liang kept company with Master Red Pine.<sup>24</sup>  
When the spirit of that true man<sup>25</sup> soared 30000 feet the 5 Mountains<sup>26</sup> in unison shouted, "Ten-thousand springs!"  
It's fate that grass should yellow and leaves should fall; the swords of Tung and Ts'ao<sup>27</sup> carved up the House of Han.  
Then came a succession of powder-puff emperors – the 6 Dynasties<sup>28</sup> – coloured frost and jade dew woven in patterns of ice.  
It ended, the pulsing of 6s and 9s<sup>29</sup> with the choice of an emperor; the wise, intelligent Tang Tai-tsung's pushed to the fore.  
His family affairs were dark, difficult to plumb; don't imitate poets who satirize sand-flies and centipedes.*

*Only because in years past beacon fires signalled the alarm by day did peach blossoms in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month shine upon a jade horse.<sup>30</sup>  
Before the horse the full moon cast a bow-shaped shadow; a pair of stars in heaven above entered sword-shaped rainbows.<sup>31</sup>  
Soldiers had no heart to grieve for jade and stones; the Dragon's troops paid no heed to anguished souls on the River Hsiang.  
In 1 night, sand- and wind-aggrieved ghosts were entombed; in mountain valleys year by year were offered tracks of tears.<sup>32</sup>  
A voice, a voice spoke only hatred for the emperor of Tang; what mattered the lavish newness of your plum blossoms?*

As the story goes, the Tang emperor had just returned from the court. He was drinking juice, enjoying the blossoms when all at once he fell asleep, and dreamed he saw a dragon king crying, "Emperor! Save my life! Save my life!" <sup>33</sup>

The girl recited the *Pipa* poem: *Sobbing in the Moonlight* and continued to tell her story: *The emperor's river of pity flowed in the palace; <sup>34</sup>he sent out gold tablets instructing all his officials: "Be quick and summon the dragon-killing officer; you Generals Black and White must both be diligent."*

*The stout cord of the emperor's words soon snapped; the butterfly<sup>35</sup> soared aloft and killed the old dragon.  
Could the Dragon King want to go anywhere without his head? In the bright moonlight he rattled the gate of the silver palace.  
Next day, too weary to mount his dragon horse and go to court, the sage ruler summoned a doctor to his palace.  
Devils came and took the emperor away for 5 days; in 9 hells, gloomy and dark, he stood before the dead.<sup>36</sup>*

*A dark official, cheating, gave him extra days and months.<sup>37</sup>  
The jade phoenix sounded again, life glimmered faintly.*

*Back and forth twixt life and death, then the Tang Emperor again as before gazed over his realm.  
He sighed and said, "How sad, how very sad – "A century of life on earth are but ephemeral. Dismal souls below the welf<sup>38</sup> – when'll they be saved?"*

*Thus, the emperor asked the monk Chen Hsüan-tsang to call to wayward, sunken souls with golden bell and jade chimes and recite with inky sleeves and banner black for souls to be reborn.*

*The Nun<sup>39</sup> herself appeared to speak the Law and find a priest who'd seek the Western Sage.  
The priest rode to the border of China; in the Tiger House<sup>40</sup> he grieved that Heaven so moulds men.  
He climbed the Mountain of 2 Frontiers, removed a god seal, and took a disciple<sup>41</sup> at the foot of Five Phases Mountain.  
At Stone Brook the yellow dragon swallowed his purple deer;<sup>42</sup>in fragrant wood white walls became red will-o'-the wisps.<sup>43</sup>*



*Wind blew into fiery eyes, the road to the West's obscured; but Ling Chi came a-flying and 100 troubles vanished.<sup>44</sup>*  
*The wise monkey cast line five of the hexagram Opposition; <sup>45</sup>defeated along the way, Bullseye saluted to the old priest.*  
*Sunset at the River of Flowing Sand, hissing's heard 1000 miles; he of mixed consciousness joined the return to pure awareness.<sup>46</sup>*  
*The globefish's after all a thing in the pond; slowly morning bells gave way to the dulcimer of desire.<sup>47</sup>*  
*When the ginseng tree was uprooted, the mournful monkey screamed; <sup>48</sup>the White-boned Lady<sup>49</sup> stood in a lush forest.*  
*When Monkey left, the priest was changed to tiger; <sup>50</sup>then Bull became the 2<sup>nd</sup> 1 to mourn.*  
*A long night hung over Lotus-flower Jade Cave; <sup>51</sup>before White Deer Mountain he saluted the Star of Longevity.<sup>52</sup>*  
*The Tang Priest whirled and exercised in the mad wind; <sup>53</sup>the Brother of the Emperor sank in the Black Water.<sup>54</sup>*  
*Taoism and Religion needn't always be at odds; poisoned blood's empty, black and yellow all alike.<sup>55</sup>*  
*Metal couldn't conquer metal, heart and spirit were blocked; <sup>56</sup>water met water, the old monk was exhausted.<sup>57</sup>*  
*Two hearts darkened heaven and earth; a pair of Sage Monkeys deceived Kuan-yin.<sup>58</sup>*  
*A banana leaf put out the fire on the mountain slope; <sup>59</sup>horse loosed from willow green, slowly on they went.*  
*Delayed days and nights at the Tower of Myriad Mirrors, who knows when they'll see the Most Reverend of Heaven?*

Ko-chiang-flower's poem had ended. She leaned over her *Pipa* and breathed a long sigh that floated off into the distance. When Monkey in the fold of the hill heard the Tower of Myriad Mirrors mentioned, suspicion arose in his mind. He thought: *The Tower of Myriad Mirrors business happened to me just yesterday. How'd she possibly know?* His temper flared and anger grew. All he wanted was to strike Little Moon King dead so he could find out what was going on.

074

Monkey Meets an Old Man in Green Bamboo Cave; By the Reed Flowers Monkey Seeks the Emperor of Ch'in

When Monkey heard the words *Tower of Myriad Mirrors* from the fold in the hill, a flame arose in his heart. He pulled his cudgel from behind his ear and jumped onto the tower, swinging wildly but struck only air. He cursed Little Moon King and said, "What country's king are you that you dare to trap my Master here?" Little Moon King looked as if he hadn't heard and went on smiling and chatting. Monkey cursed again, "You stinking blind women! What are you doing reciting here with this hairy monk?" It seemed as if the three reciting girls hadn't heard either, so he shouted, "Master, let's get out of here!" But like the others, the Tang Priest did not hear. Monkey was astounded. He said, "Am I dreaming? Or is everyone in the Emerald Green World eyeless, earless, and tongue-less? Ridiculous! Ridiculous! I'll try again to see if this is really the Master or not." He assumed the form he had used to raise havoc in Heaven.<sup>1</sup> This time however, it wouldn't do to be so brash, so he jumped to the opposite hill and took another good look. He saw that the Tang Priest looked hopelessly depressed. Little Moon King was saying, "Don't think only of sad things, Mr. Ch'en. I ask you, what about that business of digging through to Heaven? If you've decided not to continue your journey, I'll dismiss the Sky-walkers and send them home." The Tang Priest said, "I'd not made up my mind yesterday but today I've decided not to go on." Little Moon King was delighted. He at once sent someone to tell the Sky-walkers there was no more need to dig at the sky, sent word for the reciting girls to put on their makeup, and give a performance. The reciting girls knelt together and said, "Your Majesty, we can't do an opera today." Little Moon King said, "The calendar only says whether or not a day is favourable for sacrifices, for planting, for beginning school, for a capping ceremony, or for travelling. I've never seen an unfavourable day for giving a performance." The girls replied, "It's not unfavourable, Your Majesty, it's impossible. Mr. Ch'en has ten thousand sorrows and a thousand knots of sadness. If we give a successful performance, he will be moved to tears." Little Moon King cried, "What shall we do? Why don't you put on a modern play instead of an ancient play?" The girls responded, "If you want an ancient play we'll do it but we'll not do a modern play." Little Moon King snapped, "Rubbish! Today we're celebrating Mr. Ch'en's happy decision by having a great tea-banquet. How can we not have a performance? It would be lovely if you'd just do any plays you please." The girls agreed and left. Two maids attending brought fresh tea from one side. The Tang Priest sat down. From the back of the hall came a rolling of drums, a beating of gongs, a blast of horns, and much shouting. A clamour arose from the stage and the announcement came: "Today we'll perform a 'romantic' story called *Dream of Mist and Rain on Kao-Tang Terrace*.<sup>2</sup> First we'll do the five scenes about Prime Minister Sun. It'll be terrific! Just terrific!" Monkey, still hiding in the fold of the hill, heard this quite clearly. He thought, "There's a *Prime Minister Sun* and a *Dream on Kao-Tang Terrace*. I suppose they'll not leave till all the scenes have been played one by one. I might as well go find something to drink, then I'll come back and see my old monk." Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him. He turned and saw a Taoist acolyte of about thirteen hissing at him, "Little Priest! Little Priest! I've come to watch the play with you." Monkey laughed and said, "Hey little fellow, so you knew I was here and came to find me." The acolyte said, "Don't tease me. My master is no one for you to make fun of." Monkey said, "And what's your master called?" The Taoist lad said, "He is the Master of Green Grove Cave who loves guests and sightseeing jaunts." Monkey laughed and said, "Wonderful! I must go and get some tea from him. You can sit here in my place for a while and watch the play and see if the party breaks up. I'll go to your honourable master's place and get something to quench my thirst. If they do break up, would you mind coming at once to tell me?" The acolyte chuckled and said, "That's no trouble. There's nothing blocking the way into the cave – just let yourself in. I'll wait for you here." Monkey was delighted. He entered the pitch-black cave and skipped along till he came to a bright stone grotto. There he ran smack into an old man who asked, "Where do you come from, Priest? Please come in for some tea." Monkey said, "If there were no tea, I'd not have come." The old man smiled and said, "There's not necessarily tea, Priest. Why don't you go?" Monkey said, "If there's no tea, I'll not leave." The two were like old friends. They walked, laughing as they went, till they had passed a stone stairway. There they came all at once to a fairy cave at the edge of a stream. Monkey said, "Have we reached your residence?" The old man said, "Not yet. This place is called 'Imitation of an Ancient Evening Landscape.'"  
Monkey gazed at the scene. It was indeed a pleasant spot. On the left there stretched a field where random stones and about ten loquat trees with riotous branches and leaves surrounded a straw cottage. At its front door stood a great red pine and several maples entwined with mist. Their trunks and branches were woven into a stormy mountain forest. A bit of bamboo fence could be seen peeking through the trees, and two or three kinds of wildflowers poked out from the bottom of the fence. A middle-aged man strolled by the stream, leaning on a moss-covered staff. Abruptly he sat down, and cupping the clear water in his hands, took it into his mouth and swished it around and around. He did this for a long while and then stood up. He looked toward the southwest and laughed casually. When Monkey saw him laugh, he looked to the southwest himself. But he saw neither high tower nor green pavilion, dangerous cliffs or weird peaks. He saw only two splashes of mountain-colour that looked like something between clouds and mist, between being and non-being. All Monkey wanted was to have a drink of tea. How could he have any feeling for mountains and water? He and the old man walked right on and came upon another fairy cave. The old man said, "This isn't my cottage either. It's called 'Imitation of the Ancient T'ai-k'un Pond.'"  
They were surrounded on all four sides by green peaks. Some of them lifted their faces as if looking at Heaven; some bent forward as if drinking the water; some seemed to be running, some sleeping; some looked as if they were whistling; some were sitting face-to-face like Confucian scholars; some looked like they were flying; some looked possessed by spirits; and some were like cows, horses, and sheep. Monkey laughed and said, "All these stone people and stone horses are already carved but no one's put up any tombstones. I guess there's no one to write the inscriptions." The old man said, "Don't try to be funny, Little Priest. Take a look in the water." Monkey bent his head to look carefully at the water and saw therein 100 encircling green peaks. On the water's rippling surface they were as beautiful as a painting of mountains and forests. While Monkey was engrossed in looking, several fishing boats darted out from behind 1 or 2 reeds. The people sitting in the bows of those boats were mostly old men with scraggly hair and dirty faces. It was hard to tell what they were reciting – it was not the *Angler's Poem* or the *Picking the Lotus*. They recited:  
*Right nor wrong ever came to fishing spots; glory and shame follow men on horseback.*  
*You, honoured guest, seek the World of Oblivion?*  
*Push the oars forward, pull slightly back look to the south, flutter the oars, push, push, and then pull!*  
When Monkey heard the words *World of Oblivion*, he asked the old man, "Where's this World of Oblivion?" The old man said, "Who might you be looking for?" Monkey said, "My relative, the First Emperor of Ch'in, recently moved to the World of Oblivion. I'd like to see him and have a word with him." The old man said, "Well, if you want to go, just cross here. You'll come to a belt of green mountains. They are his back door." Monkey said, "But if I go off in a world as big as this one, I'll be unable to find him. I'll not go." The old man said, "The First Emperor of Ch'in is also an old friend of mine. If you're afraid to go, leave a message with me, and I'll give it to him when I see him tomorrow." Monkey said, "I've another relative, the Tang emperor who wants to borrow a Mountain-removing Bell from my relative the First Emperor of Ch'in." The old man said, "Oh, what rotten luck! Someone just borrowed it yesterday." Monkey said, "Who borrowed it?" The old man said, "It was loaned to Han Kao-tsu."<sup>3</sup> Monkey laughed and said, "So, an old man like you lies like a youngster, eh? Han Kao-tsu was the First Emperor of Ch'in's mortal enemy. How could he borrow the bell?" The old man said, "Don't you know, Little Priest, that by now the old enmity between Ch'in and Han has disappeared?" Monkey said, "If that's so, when you see the First Emperor, tell him for me that in two days when Han Kao-tsu finishes using the bell I'll come to borrow it." The old man said, "That'll be fine." After chatting for a while, Monkey became even thirstier. He cried out, "I want tea! Give me some tea!" The old man smiled and said, "Since you're a relative of the First Emperor of Ch'in, and I'm an old friend of his, we're, after all, flesh and blood. If you want tea, I'll give you tea. If you want food, I'll give you food. Please come to my cottage." The two of them passed beyond the green encircling peaks and, taking another path, arrived at the Fairy Cave of Green Bamboo. Green moss covered the ground; bamboo stalks stretched to the sky. In their midst stood four cottages of purple bamboo, and the two entered one of them straightaway. The main room's cross-beam was made of Hsiang River Goddess bamboo and its pillars of mud-green bamboo. The doors of the gate were of wind-man bamboo, flattened and stitched together. There was a square bamboo bed whose curtain was bamboo paper. The old man went to the back of the room and brought out two bowls of magnolia-flower tea. Monkey took one in his hand, drank a few sips, and quenched his thirst. The old man prepared an oil-bamboo table and four green bamboo chairs, and they sat down facing each other. The old man asked about Monkey's eight characters. "Monkey laughed and said, "You and I met by chance. We're not sworn brothers and we don't want to match a marriage. Why do you want to know my eight characters?" The old man said, "I tell fortunes by horoscope and I've never been wrong. Since you're a relative of my good friend the First Emperor of Ch'in, I want to tell your fortune and see what good luck you'll have in the future. This will be a favour to my friend." Monkey lifted his head and thought. He said, "My eight characters are extremely good." The old man said, "I've not even worked it out yet. How can you already know they're good?" Monkey said, "I've often asked people to tell my fortune. The year before last a black-robed fortune teller was going to tell my fortune, and when he heard my eight characters, he was startled. He stood up and saluted to me with his hands clasped, saying over and over, 'I beg your pardon! I beg your pardon!'

"Then he called me 'little official,' and said, 'These eight characters of yours are exactly those of the Great Sage Equal of Heaven.' I remember that the Great Sage Equal of Heaven went on a rampage in the Heavenly Palace and displayed his awesome spirit. Now he is soon to become a god. Since my eight characters are the same as his, how can they be bad?"

The old man said, "The Great Sage Equal of Heaven was born on the first day of the first month in the first year of a sixty-year cycle."

Monkey said, "That's me. I was born on the first day of the first month in the first year of a sixty-year cycle."

The old man laughed and said, "They say if your appearance is good, your fate is good; if your fate is good, your appearance is good – this is indeed no mistake. There's no need to tell me your eight characters. Even your face is a monkey's."

Monkey said, "This Great Sage Equal of Heaven – could it be that he has a monkey face too?"

The old man laughed and said, "You're not the real Great Sage Equal of Heaven – you've *only* a monkey face. If you're really the Great Sage Equal of Heaven, you'd be a monkey spirit!"

Monkey lowered his head and chuckled. He said, "Be quick, old man, and tell my fortune."

In fact, since Monkey was born from a stone egg he had never found out his own eight characters. His birth date was kept in a jade box in the Upper Palace, and was passed on only in the deep mountains and secret valleys. Now he was using this trick to bring it out. The old man wasn't wise to Monkey's scheme and began to relate his fortune. "Little Priest," he said, "don't blame me if I don't flatter you to your face."

Monkey laughed and said, "It's better not to flatter me."

The old man said, "Your life was established in the key of D, enmity for you lies in G. Favour is found in the key of C, you dwell in the key of E, and difficulty comes in the key of A.<sup>5</sup> This month is *re*, and it clashes with the Star of Difficulty. Therefore, certain things will go wrong to make you angry. The Star of Augmented *Fa* also enters into your fate. Augmented *Fa* is a goddess of the Moon. A scripture says, 'When one comes upon Augmented *Fa*, there will be a bizarre encounter. A beautiful girl will meet a handsome young man.'

"As for you, Little Priest, since you're a monk we'd not talk about matters of husband and wife – but in terms of your fate, you ought to get married."

Monkey responded, "How about that dry marriage I was involved in?"<sup>6</sup>

The old man said, "Marriage is marriage, dry or wet. It's all in your horoscope. Now, you'll encounter the Star of *La* in the key of E. This is a beneficial star. Suddenly the Water Star of the Southern Palace becomes involved. This is another star of difficulty. A scripture says, 'When one meets both favour and difficulty at once, it's called "The Sea of Evil." A stone man or iron horse will find it difficult to bear.' Judging from this, you'd have both the blessing of acquiring new family members and the sorrow of a relative's departure."

Monkey asked, "I added one master and left one master. Does that count?"

The old man said, "For a monk that will do. However, when this day is past, there will be more strange occurrences. Tomorrow you enter the Stars of *So* and *La*. You must kill people."

Monkey thought, "Killing people is a small matter...nothing to worry about."

The old man again said, "Three days from now you'll come into the Star of Augmented *Do*. A scripture says, 'Augmented *Do* is otherwise called the Star of Brightness. It will make even a weary, muddled old man clear and intelligent.' This is a case of benevolence in hardship and hardship in benevolence. The four great stars of change – Sun, Moon, Water, and Earth – will also enter your fate. I'm afraid, Little Priest, you must die once in order to live again."

Monkey laughed and said, "Life and death are nothing serious. If I must die, I'll be dead for a few years. If I must live, then I'll live for a year or two."

The two of them were thus entranced in conversation when the acolyte rushed in and shouted, "Little Priest! The play is almost finished. The Kao-Tang dream is already over. Hurry! Hurry!"

Monkey quickly took leave of the old man, thanked the acolyte, and returned the same way he had come. When he got to the fold in the hill, he peered into the tower and heard, "There's still one part of *Dream on Kao-Tang Terrace* to go." He strained his eyes to watch the play. On the stage he saw a Taoist and five mortals. The Taoist said, "A Taoist who wished to save the ignorant fully explained men's desires and the ways of the world. Keep this in your hearts when you wake from your dreams, you people of the world."

Then Monkey heard the people on stage rumble, "*The Dream of South Branch's*" tedious. Only *Prime Minister Sun's* ever played well. Prime Minister Sun's no other than Sun Wukong. Look! His wife's so beautiful, his five sons so dashing. He started out as a monk but came to such a good end! Such a very good end!"

075

Young Lord Tang Accepts an Order to Lead the Troops; Lady Green-twine Becomes a Broken Jade by the Pool

Monkey heard all this clearly from the fold of the hill. He said, "I've been single and chaste since I was born from the stone egg. When was I married to any woman? When did I ever have five children? It must be that Little Moon King really likes my Master and can't get him to stay here. Since he was afraid the Master was thinking about me, what he did was to slander me and write this play saying I'd become a high official, husband, and dad. He's trying to get the Master to change his mind and forget about the West. But I mustn't be too hasty – I'll watch and see what happens."

At that moment he heard the Tang Priest say, "I don't want to see any more plays. Ask Lady Green-twine to come here."

A maid immediately brought in a jade flying-cloud teapot and a teacup painted with scenes from the Hsiao and Hsiang Rivers. Shortly, Lady Green-twine entered. She was indeed an exotic beauty who could not be matched in a millennium whose fragrance waited for ten miles. In his fold of the hill Monkey thought, "When people on earth speak of beauty, they speak in comparison to Nun Kuan-yin. Now, I've not seen the Nun often – maybe ten or twenty times – but seeing this lady, it almost seems the Nun could be her disciple. I wonder what the Master will do when he sees her."

Lady Green-twine had just been seated when Bullseye and Sandy appeared behind her. The Tang Priest said angrily, "Chu Wu-neng! Last night you peeped from the Little Animal Palace and startled my beloved lady. I've dismissed you. What are you doing here?"

Bullseye said, "The ancients said, 'Great anger doesn't last the night.' Young Lord Ch'en, please forgive me this time."

The Tang Priest said, "Well, if you don't go, I'll write a bill of separation to send you away."

Sandy said, "Young Lord Ch'en, if you want to drive us off, we'll leave. When a husband wants to get rid of his wife, he has to write a bill of divorce. But when a master wants to dismiss disciples there's no need for that."

Bullseye said, "There's no harm in it – these days there are many masters and disciples who are husband and wife. But where does Young Lord Ch'en expect us two to go?"

The Tang Priest said, "You return to your wife. Sandy can go back to the River of Flowing Sand."

Sandy said, "I'm not going to the River of Flowing Sand. I'll go to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit to be a Counterfeit Monkey."

The Tang Priest said, "Wukong has been made a prime minister. Where is he now?"

Sandy said, "He's not a prime minister anymore. He's following another master and continuing toward the West."

The Tang Priest said, "If that's so, you two will surely run into him on the road. By all means stop him from coming to bother me here." He asked for a brush and ink-stone and began to write the bill of separation:

Wu-neng is my thief; were I to keep a thief, I'd be sheltering a thief. If I don't shelter the thief, he'll not have a home. If the thief doesn't cling to me, I'll be clean. If the thief and I remain together, we'll both become thieves. If the thief and I separate, we'd both benefit. I don't love you, Wu-neng – leave quickly.

Bullseye took the bill of separation mournfully. The Tang Priest again wrote:

The writer of this bill of separation is Ch'en Hsüan-tsang, beloved brother of Little Moon King. The appearance of the Monster-monk Sandy is very grim. He has not cast off his mixed consciousness so he is not my disciple. Today I dismiss him. I'll not see him again till we go to the Yellow Spring. Witnessed by Little Moon King and Lady Green-twine.

Sand, too was very sad as he accepted his bill of separation. The 2 of them went out of the tower together and left. The Tang Priest was unconcerned. He laughed and said to Little Moon-King, "I'm rather a nuisance, am I not?" then he asked, "Lady Green-twine, what has happened since this morning?"

Lady Green-twine replied, "I was feeling depressed so I wrote a poem to the verses of *Crow's Nest*. I'd like to recite it for you." She gathered up her sleeves and knitted her eyebrows. In a lilting voice she recited:

3, 5 stars in the bright moon of the 16<sup>th</sup>: Ding, ding, *chimes the water clock*, thrum, thrum, *sounds the drum*.  
No bridge over the Milky Way! for our mutual love; this pitiful girl passes a pitiful night.

Her poem ended, she was overcome by sorrow. "My Young Lord," she cried, "our relationship's finished."

She embraced the Tang Priest miserably. The Tang Priest was alarmed and tried to comfort her with pleasant words. Lady Green-twine sobbed and said, "How can you be like this when separation is at hand?" She pointed with one finger and said, "Look to the south, Young Lord, and you'll know what I mean."

The Tang Priest turned his head to see a band of mounted soldiers galloping toward them carrying a yellow banner. He began to feel uneasy. Before long the tower was filled with soldiers on horseback. One officer in a purple robe carried an imperial decree. He saluted the Tang Priest and said, "I'm a messenger from New Tang." He ordered, "Soldiers, help the Supreme Commander into uniform."<sup>2</sup>

They quickly set up an incense table. The Tang Priest knelt facing northward, and the purple-robed officer, facing south, read the decree. After he finished reading, the officer took out a five-coloured tally and gave it to the Tang Priest, saying, "There can be no delay, General. The enemy from the West is at hand. Bring out your troops immediately."

The Tang Priest said, "You've no tact, officer. You may wait until I've taken leave of my family." He turned and went to the back of the hall to look for Lady Green-twine. She had watched him being made a general, and now, prepared to depart on his journey, he seemed pressed for time. Embracing him with both arms she wept and collapsed to the floor. She said, "How can I let you go, Young Lord? Your body is sick and feeble. A general spends his days on windy mountains and sleeps in damp valleys. There will be no relative to look after you and tell you when to put on an extra unlined robe or take off one of your white sashes. You'll have to take care of yourself and adjust for the cold. Young Lord, always remember what I say at our parting: don't use harsh punishment on your soldiers and officers for fear they might do you evil; be careful in accepting surrendered soldiers for fear they might rob your camp; don't rush heedlessly into dark forests. If the horses whinny at sunset, don't keep going. If in spring there are flowers on the riverbank, don't step on them. If there are cool nights in summer, don't stay out in the breeze. When you're depressed, don't think about today; but when you're happy, don't forget me. Alas, my Lord, how can I let you go? Were I to go with you, I fear it would violate your orders. But if I let you go alone, my Lord, don't you know how long the sad windy nights will be? It's better my fragile soul should join you in your jade general's tent."

The Tang Priest and Lady Green-twine joined in a tight embrace and weiled. They swayed in each other's arms till they fell beside the Pool of Broken Jade. Lady Green-twine threw herself into the water. The Tang Priest wept bitterly and called, "Lady! Lady! Come back to me!" The purple-robed officer galloped in, whisked the Tang Priest away, and the whole army hurried toward the west.

076

The Tang Priest Musters His Troops under the Midnight Moon; the Great Sage's Spirit Falters Before the Banners of 5 Colours

It was already evening when from the fold of the hill Monkey saw that his Master had indeed become a general. The matter of getting the scriptures had been shelved, and Monkey was left quite bewildered. He could think of nothing to do but take on the guise of a soldier and mingle with the troops. He passed a troubled night. At dawn the next morning, the Tang Priest sat in his tent and ordered soldiers to raise the banner saying, "Enlisting Soldiers. Buying Horses."

A soldier carried out the order, and by noon the new recruits and officers numbered 2000000. Another troubled day passed for Monkey. The Tang Priest appointed a minor general of the White Banner also called his *minor personal general* who gave orders to build a gold-chained commander's platform and compile a register of soldiers' names that night. He then ordered a roll call to be made from the platform on the next evening. The next night at the third watch the moon shone bright as day. The Tang Priest ascended the platform and issued orders for all his generals, saying: "Tonight my roll call of officers and soldiers won't be the same as in the past. When one toll of the bell's heard, all soldiers will prepare their meals. When the bell's tolled twice, armour must be put on. When the bell tolls thrice, all should resolve their wills and rouse their spirits. At four tolls of the bell, the men should assemble beneath the platform for muster."

The minor general of the White Banner received the order and told the other officers, "Pay heed and spread the order, officers. Tonight's roll call will be unusual. When one toll of the bell is heard, all soldiers are to prepare their meals. When the bell is sounded twice, armour must be put on. When the bell sounds thrice, resolve your wills and rouse your spirits. At four tolls of the bell, assemble beneath the platform for muster. There is to be no delay."

To which every officer and soldier in the whole camp responded, "If the commander gives an order, who dares disobey?"

The Tang Priest again commanded, "White Banner, this is an order: The officers and men are not to call me *Commander*, they're to call me *Reverend Commander*." The Minor General of the White Banner relayed the order throughout the camp. The bell on the platform was sounded once. When the officers and soldiers heard it, they quickly prepared their food. The Tang Priest again commanded, "Little General of the White Banner, relay this order to all my officers: When I give the roll call, bring all your training to bear. Don't be lackadaisical about falling in and don't wander aimlessly." The bell

on the platform rang twice. The officers and soldiers hurriedly strapped on their armour. The Tang Priest commanded, “White Banner, raise the banner for the roll call. Send the order to all regiments that waterways and mountain gorges are to be strictly controlled. Anyone allowing a freelance strategist who speaks or dresses irregularly into the camp will be beheaded.” White Banner followed the command and relayed the order across the camp. The Tang Priest again commanded, “White Banner, give this order to the officers and the men: If anyone’s absent at the roll call, he’ll lose his head. The same for anyone passing in front of the commander’s gate. Anyone who pretends to be sick or looks to the left or right will lose his head. Anyone who recommends himself will lose his head. Anyone who goes ahead of his turn will lose his head. Anyone jumping or shouting will lose his head. So will anyone who hides something from his superiors or takes someone else’s place. Anyone whispering into another’s ear will lose his head. Anyone who brings a girl or lets his thoughts wander or daydreams will lose his head. The same for anyone who lacks fierce determination or loses his temper and starts a quarrel.” When these orders had been given, the bell on the platform rang out 3 times. Every man in the regiments focused his resolve and stirred his fighting spirit. The Tang Priest, too closed his eyes and sat quietly on the platform beneath the bright moon. An hour later four rings of the bell sounded. From all camps the officers and men assembled before the platform for muster. 1 could see: *banners and flags in perfect formation, swords and spears formed a forest, arrayed like the 28 constellations – dipper banner on the left, cowherd on the right – every constellation distinct, arranged like the 64 hexagrams – heaven’s axes in odd-numbered lines, axes of earth in the even – every line in place. At the 1<sup>st</sup> roar of the precious swords, fierce tigers on 10000 mountains fell silent. Scales on armour of rhinoceros-hide made the 5 Seas’ gold dragons seem pale. Each 1 of them a malevolent star; every voice, the crashing of thunder.* The Tang Priest followed the roll-book and called each name in order. He shouted, “You officers and men now that I’m in the army, I can have no compassion. Every one of you must pay attention to avoid the axe.” He immediately waved a flag to signal the order, and shouted the names of 6605 of his troops in a row. Then he came to “Great General Bullseye Aware of Ability.” The moment the Tang Priest saw the name, he knew it was Bullseye. But in the army one must be quite serious; it doesn’t do to show you know someone. He shouted, “You, General – so ugly and fierce. You must be a monster trying to deceive me. White Banner, push that fellow out and cut off his head.”

Bullseye respected repeatedly while saying, “Reverend Commander, cool your anger! Allow me one word before I die.” And he said: *“My surname’s Bull born eighth in my clan. I followed the Tang Priest to the Western Land but midway he wrote a bitter bill of separation. I went to seek refuge in my dad-in-law’s village but I found that my wife had returned to Dry Ditch so I turned once more and walked toward the West and blundered into the Commander’s camp. I kneel in hope that the Commander will spare me to work as a scullery in his camp.”*

A tiny smile crossed the Tang Priest’s face and he ordered White Banner to release the bonds. Bullseye respected a hundred times, thanking the Tang Priest. The name “Lady-General Flower Kuei” was called. A woman officer carrying a sword galloped out of formation. Indeed she was: *a beautiful girl of 16, body smooth as cheese, she will breathe essence of Heaven and Earth till both go dry. A flying dragon sword hangs from her waist only for killing those handsome, lustful men.* The name “Great General Sun Wukong” was called.

The Tang Priest blanched and gazed below his platform. It happened that Monkey had mixed amongst the army for the past three days in the form of a 6-eared monkey soldier. When he heard the name *Sun Wukong*, he leaped out of formation and knelt on the ground, saying, “Little General Sun Wukong’s transporting supplies and couldn’t be present. I’m his brother Sun Wuhuan and wish to take his place in battle. In this I dare disobey the Commander’s order.”

The Tang Priest said, “Sun Wuhuan, what’s your origin? Tell me quickly and I’ll spare your life.”

Hopping and dancing, Monkey said: *“In the old days I was a monster who took the name of monkey. After the Great Sage left the Tang Priest, I became his close relation by way of marriage. There’s no need to ask my name, I’m the Six-eared Monkey, Great General Sun Wuhuan.*

The Tang Priest said, “The six-eared ape used to be monkey’s enemy. Now he’s forgotten the old grudge and become generous. He must be a good man.” He ordered White Banner to give Sun Wuhuan a suit of the iron armour of the vanguard and appointed him “Vanguard General to Destroy Entrenchment.”

When the roll of officers and soldiers was concluded, the Tang Priest quickly handed down an order. The troops were to form the beautiful-lady-seeking-her-husband formation to take advantage of the bright moon for their attack on the Western Barbarians. Once the troops had crossed the border into the land of the Western Barbarians, the Tang Priest ordered officers and soldiers alike to display a small yellow banner as an identifying mark so they wouldn’t become confused. The banners were fixed in place and the march continued. Just as they came around a mountain, they confronted a band of horsemen carrying green banners. Since Monkey was general of the vanguard, he immediately jumped to the front of the ranks. From the midst of the green banner horsemen emerged a general in a purple helmet, carrying a sword to meet his enemy. Monkey demanded, “Who comes?”

The general said, “I’m King Paramita. ‘Who’re you that dares to challenge me?”

Monkey said, “I’m Sun Wuhuan, in the vanguard of he who carries the seal ‘Great Tang’s Supreme Commander for Wiping out Desire.”

King Paramita said, “I’m the great honey king? who would dethrone your great sugar king.”

He whipped out his sword and struck. Monkey said, “So – such a pitiful, nameless little general as you wants to soil my cudgel?”

He raised his cudgel to meet the blow. They fought several rounds. No one could tell who was winning when King Paramita said, “Hold it! If I don’t tell you about my family when I kill you and you become a ghost, you’ll still think I’m just a nameless little general. Allow me to explain: I, King Paramita, am none other than a direct descendant of Monkey Sun, the Great Sage Equal of Heaven who caused a great uproar in Heaven.”

Monkey heard this and thought, “Strange...Is it possible that the play given the other day was real? Here is the evidence before my eyes. How can it be false? But I don’t know where my other four sons are and if my wife is still alive. If she’s not dead, I wonder what she’s doing now. And I don’t know if this is my youngest son or the eldest. I’d like to ask him for details but the Master’s orders are very strict and I dare not disobey. I’ll sound him out a bit more.”

So he shouted, “Monkey’s my sworn brother and he never told me he had any children. How can he suddenly have a son?”

King Paramita said, “I see you still don’t understand. I, King Paramita and my dad, Monkey are a dad and son who’ve never met. My dad, Monkey’s originally a monster who lived in the Water-curtain Cave. He’d a sworn brother, my uncle called Demon Bull-King. My uncle doesn’t sleep with his first wife, Demoness. That woman who lives in Banana Cave’s my mum. When a Tang Priest from the southeast wanted to go to the Western Paradise and meet a god, he asked my dad, Monkey to be his disciple. They’d encountered numberless hardships on the road to the West when one day they came upon Flaming Mountain. The Master and his several disciples fretted and grieved to no end. Then my dad had a good idea. He said, ‘A Master for one day’s a dad for life. I’ll temporarily forget my vows of loyalty to my sworn brother in order to repay my Master’s kindness.’ He went at once to the Banana Cave. First he changed himself into the Demon Bull-King and deceived my mum. Later he changed into a tiny insect and entered my mum’s belly. He stayed there a while and caused her no end of agony. When my mum could no longer bear the pain, she’d no choice but to give the Banana-leaf Fan to my dad, Monkey. When my dad, Monkey got the Banana-leaf Fan, he cooled the inferno at Flaming Mountain and left. <sup>3</sup>In the fifth month of the next year, my mum suddenly gave birth to me, King Paramita. Day by day I grew older and more intelligent. If you think about it since my uncle and mum had never been together and I was born after my dad, Monkey had been inside my mum’s belly, the fact that I’m his direct descendant’s beyond dispute.” Monkey was between tears and laughter after this story. Just then thoroughly confused, he saw to the northwest Little Moon King bringing a column of soldiers, distinguishable by their purple battle dress, to relieve the Tang Priest. From the southwest came a column of devil soldiers under a black banner to assist King Paramita. King Paramita’s troops were fierce. They charged headlong into the Tang Priest’s lines and killed Little Moon King. Then turning, they cut off the head of the Tang Priest. Confusion reigned. There was much killing amongst the 4 armies and Monkey did not know what to do. He could only watch, spellbound. He saw the black banners fall in amongst the ranks of the purple banners. Purple banners lay across green banners. 1 green banner flew into the purple banners. Purple banners marched into the ranks of the yellow banners. Yellow banners angled into the black banners. A large black banner<sup>4</sup> fell from the sky onto the yellow banners, killing yellow banner-men. Yellow banner-men rushed into the ranks of the green banners and seized several green banners that were snatched away in turn by purple banner-men. Purple banner-men killed their own men. Several hundred purple banners fell into the blood and were dyed lychee-red. These were gathered by yellow banner-men into their ranks. Green banner-men marched into the troops under black banners and killed a number of them. Several small black banners flew into the air and fell onto a pine tree while a million men in the ranks of yellow banners fell into a pit. 100 small yellow command banners flew in amongst the small green command banners and they blended into the colour of duck’s-head green. 16 or 17 small purple command banners fell in with the green banners and the green banner troops threw them into the air. They fell onto the troops of the black banners and disappeared. Now Monkey was enraged. He could not control himself.

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The Elder of the Void Rouses Monkey from His Dream; When the Great Sage Returns, the Sun Is Half Hidden in the Mountains

Unable to control himself, Monkey changed into the 3-headed, 6-armed form in which he had rebelled in the Heavenly Palace. He struck out wildly in the air. From behind someone called loudly, “Is Wukong no longer aware of vacuity? Is Wuhan no longer aware of illusion?”<sup>1</sup>

Monkey turned his head and asked, “What country’s general are you, that you dare to address me?”

Looking up he saw an elder sitting on a lotus platform. The elder called again, “Sun Wukong, aren’t you awake yet?”

Monkey stopped swinging his cudgel and asked, “Who are you?”

The elder replied, “I’m the Master of the Void. I’ve watched you living in this false universe for quite some time, and I’ve come specially to rouse you. At this moment your real Master is hungry.”

Monkey began to wake up a bit. It seemed that what had happened was all an illusion. He concentrated his whole mind, shutting out what had gone before, and begged the Master for instruction. The Master of the Void said, “You’ve been snared in the aura of the Qing Fish.”

Monkey asked, “What kind of demon is this Qing Fish that he can create a universe?”

The Master of the Void said, “When Heaven and Earth first split apart, the pure essence ascended, and the turbid sank. The half-pure and half-turbid remained in the middle, and that is man. What was mostly pure and only in small measure turbid gravitated to the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, giving birth to Wukong. That which was mostly turbid and only in small measure pure gravitated to Little Moon Cave, giving birth to the Qing Fish. The Qing Fish and Wukong were born in the same hour, the only difference was that Wukong belonged to goodness while the Qing Fish belonged to evil. But the Qing Fish’s supernatural powers are ten times greater than Wukong’s, and his body is extremely large. When he takes Kunlun Mountains as a pillow for his head, his feet rest in the Kingdom of Dark Oblivion. Now he finds the World of Reality too small for him, so he dwells in the World of Illusion that he calls the Emerald Green World.”

Monkey said, “What are illusion and reality?”

The Master said, “There’re three parts to creation: one part’s No-Illusion, one part’s Illusion and one’s Reality.” Then he recited this poem:

*No springtime lads and lasses played; they’re the root of the Qing Fish.*

*No New Emperor ever lived; he’s the energy of the Qing Fish.*

*No green bamboo broom ever swept the hall; that’s the name of the Qing Fish.*

*No general’s commission was ever issued; it’s the pattern of the Qing Fish.*

*No sky-gouging axes ever struck through; they’re the form of the Qing Fish.*

*No Little Moon-King ever lived; he’s the spirit of the Qing Fish.*

*No Tower of Myriad Mirrors stood tall; it’s the creation of the Qing Fish.*

*No man in the mirror ever beckoned; that’s the body of the Qing Fish.*

*No Headache World ever existed; it’s the construction of the Qing Fish.*

*No Green Pearl’s tower’s ever erected; it’s the heart of the Qing Fish.*

*No Hsiang Yü of Bull ever strode forth; he’s the soul of the Qing Fish.*

*No Beautiful Lady Yü ever died; she’s a delusion of the Qing Fish.*

*King Yama’s never absent from Hell; his was the world of the Qing Fish.*

*The World of the Ancients never existed; it’s a fabrication of the Qing Fish.*

*Nor did the World of the Future exist; it’s the congealing of the Qing Fish.*

*No Limitation Hexagram Palace stood firm; it’s the place of the Qing Fish.*

*No Young Lord of Tang ever went to war; he’s the sport of the Qing Fish.*

*Reciting and exercising were never indulged in; that’s the nature of the Qing Fish.*

*No Lady Green-twine ever wept; she’s the exhaustion of the Qing Fish.*

*No roll call platform’s ever built; it’s the movement of the Qing Fish.*

*No battle with Paramita ever ensued; that’s the brawling of the Qing Fish.*

*For there’s no Qing Fish; there’s simply Monkey’s desire.*

When he finished, a great gust of wind arose and blew Monkey back to the mountain path. And he saw that the sun above the peony tree had barely moved. It happened that when the real Tang Priest awoke from his spring nap he found the boys and girls had already gone away. He was quite pleased, except that he didn't see Monkey. He woke Bullseye and Sandy and asked where Monkey had gone. Sandy said, "I don't know." Bullseye said, "I don't know."

All at once they saw Mu-ch'a, an attendant of Nun Kuan-yin, and a fair-faced monk riding an auspicious cloud and coming from the southwest. It fluttered down, and Mu-ch'a said, "Tang Priest, take this new disciple. The Great Sage will return in a little while."

The Tang Priest jumped to his feet and respected. Mu-ch'a said, "Nun Kuan-yin is concerned about your hardship on the Western Road and sends this little disciple to join you here. However he's very young so the Nun urges your reverence to watch after him. The Nun has already given him the religious name Wu-Qing (Aware-of-Desire). She says that although Wu-Qing is your reverence's fourth disciple, he should be placed second only to Wukong and above Wu-neng in order to complete the phrase, "make empty of desire and be purified." <sup>2</sup>

The Tang Priest accepted the Nun's order and took in the disciple, then saw Mu-ch'a off. The Qing Fish demon had in fact distracted the Mind-Monkey with the sole intention of devouring the Tang Priest.<sup>3</sup> Thus while he entangled the Great Sage, he also changed his shape to that of a little monk to ensnare the Priest. How was he to know that the Great Sage had been awakened by the Elder of the Void? This shows that though evil demons use a thousand schemes, one whose mind is straight need fear no demon. When Monkey returned through the air, he spied the little monk sitting by his Master. The monk's evil aura rose ten thousand feet, and Monkey knew right off that he was a transformation of the Qing Fish. He took his cudgel from behind his ear and struck without a second thought. In an instant the little monk had turned into the corpse of a mackerel. "A beam of red light issued from the corpse's mouth. Monkey followed it with his eyes, and he saw a tower appear within the red beam. In the tower stood the Hegemon of Ch'u. He shouted, "I beg your leave, Beautiful Lady Yü!"

Then the beam of red light passed to the southeast and disappeared. The Tang Priest said, "Wukong, I'm famished!"

When Monkey heard this, he quickly turned and with his hands clasped made a great salute toward his Master. He repeated what had just happened from beginning to end. Now when the Tang Priest had found Monkey missing, he was at first quite anxious. But when Monkey returned and straight off killed his new disciple, he grew angry and was about to reprimand him. Then he saw that the new disciple had become a mackerel corpse. He quickly realised that Monkey's intentions were good while the new disciple had been a demon. And when he heard Monkey describe the fierceness of the demon, his anger changed to joy. He said, "You've been through a lot of trouble, Disciple."

Bullseye said, "Wukong just went to play. If that's trouble, then when we really meet trouble the Master will call it play."

The Tang Priest made Bullseye be quiet and asked Monkey, "Wukong, you say you passed several days in the Emerald Green World. Why's it not even been an hour here?"

Monkey said, "Though the mind is deluded, time is not."

The Tang Priest said, "I wonder which is longer – mind or time?"

Monkey said, "When mind is short, it is God. When time is short, it is a demon."

Sandy said, "The demon has been destroyed. The world is pure and empty. Brother, why don't you go to the village again and beg for some food? Let the Master sit for a while with a quiet mind, then we'll start again on the Western road."

Monkey said, "All right," and walked on ahead. He had gone just a short way when he ran into the local mountain deity. Monkey cursed him, "How insolent you're! I was looking for you the other day to ask you something but when I said the magic words you never came. What kind of great local deity are you anyway? Quick! Stick out your leg and I'll give it a hundred whacks. Then we'll sort it out."

The deity begged him. "Lord Great Sage, just then you're dragged beyond Heaven by the Demon of Desire. My powers are limited. How could I go beyond Heaven to respect to you? Please, Great Sage, weigh my merit against this guilt."

Monkey said, "What merit do you claim?"

The deity replied, "I took your flower ball from Lord Bullseye's ear."

Monkey dismissed him. Then intent on begging for food, he leaped into the air. To 1 side he saw a path covered with peach blossoms. A wisp of smoke rose indistinctly from amidst the wood. Immediately he lowered his cloud to take a look. Finding it to be a nice house, Monkey went inside and was looking for someone he could ask for food when he came upon a quiet room. There sat a master who had gathered several disciples around him and was explicating a text. He was explaining and discussing none other than: "It encompasses Heaven, Earth, and nothing escapes it."

**PART VI**  
**THE JOURNEY RESUMES**  
**078**  
**Bathe mind just sweep a pagoda to wash off filth; bind demons & return to the self-cultivation of the lord**  
*In all 12 hours! you must never forget to reap the fruit of night and day.<sup>2</sup>*  
*For 5 years – 108000 rounds – <sup>3</sup>let not spirit water run dry, nor let fire-light cause you distress.*  
*There's no harm where fire and water blend well; 5 Phases would join as if enchained.*  
*Yin and yang at peace raise you up cloudy tower: <sup>4</sup>ride the phoenix to reach Heaven; mount the crane to head for Yingzhou.*

The poem of this stanza is *Mortal by the River* that we use solely to depict Tripitaka and his 3 disciples. Since they attained the condition wherein water and fire were in perfect equilibrium, their own natures became pure and cool. Successful in their endeavour to borrow the treasure fan of pure yin, they managed to extinguish the large mountain of torrid flames; and in less than a day, they traversed the distance of eight hundred. Leisurely and carefree, master and disciples proceeded toward the West. As it was the time of late autumn and early winter, this was what they saw: *wild chrysanthemum drop their blooms; tender buds emerge from new plums. At each village they harvest grains; everywhere they eat fragrant fare. The woods shed their leaves and distant hills are seen; by Brookside frost thickens, cleansing the ravine. Moved by the wintry breeze, the insects stop their work. Pure yin now becomes yang, the month's ruled by Yuan-Ming. <sup>5</sup>Water virtue's strong for peace reigns in bright, clear days. Earth's aura descends; heaven's aura rises; the rainbow leaves without a trace; ice slowly forms in pools and ponds. Dangling by the ridges, wisteria flowers fade; absorbing cold, pines and bamboos grow greener.* After they travelled for quite a while, the 4 of them again found themselves approaching a moated city. Reining in his horse, the Tang Monk called out to his disciple: "Wukong, look at those tall, towering buildings over there. What kind of a place do you think it is?" Pilgrim raised his head to look and saw that it was indeed a moated city. Truly it has *the shape of a coiled dragon, this crouched-tiger-like strong city. On all sides bright canopies overhang it with many turns royal plains level out. Beasts of jade and stone form the bridges' railings; statues of worthies stand on golden mounts. Truly it seems like a capital of China, a metropolis of Heaven; a secure domain of 10000 miles, a prosperous empire of a millennium. Barbarians yield to the ruler's far-reaching grace; mountains and seas pay tribute to the sages' court. The royal steps are clean; the royal path's serene; the taverns bustle with poems; flowered towers are full of joy. Evergreens outside the Weiyang Palace<sup>6</sup> should let the phoenix recite to greet the dawn.* "Master," said Pilgrim, "that moated city's to be the domain of a ruler or king."

"In this world," said 8 Rules with a laugh, "there're cities that belong to a prefecture and cities that belong to a district. How do you know that this is the domain of a ruler or a king?"

"Don't you know," said Pilgrim, "that the domain of a king or a ruler is quite different from a prefecture or a district? Just look at those gates on all four sides of the city: there must be over ten of them. The circumference around it has to be over a hundred miles. The buildings are so tall that there are clouds and fog hovering over them. If this is not a royal capital of some sort, how could it have so grand and noble an appearance?"

"You've good eyes, Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "and may recognise that it's a royal city. Do you know it's name?"

Pilgrim replied, "There are neither banners nor plaques. How could I know its name? We've to make inquiries inside the city, and then we'll know."

Urging his horse on, the elder soon arrived at the gate where he dismounted to walk across the moat-bridge. As he looked around after he entered the gate, he discovered flourishing trades in all three markets and the six boulevards; and he saw moreover that in their elegant attire, the people looked most distinguished. As they walked along, they suddenly caught sight of a score of monks begging from door to door, everyone carrying the cangue and wearing a lock. They looked most destitute indeed!

"When the hare dies," sighed Tripitaka, "the fox will grieve, for a creature will mourn its kind." Then he called out:

"Wukong, go up there and question them. Why are they so condemned?" Obeying his master's words, Pilgrim said, "Hey, monks! Which monastery do you belong to? Why are you carrying the cangue and wearing the lock?" Going to their knees, the monks said, "Dad, we're monks of the Golden Light Monastery who have been grievously wronged."

"Where is this Golden Light Monastery?" asked Pilgrim.

"Just around the corner there," said one of the monks.

Pilgrim brought them before the Tang Monk before he asked them again, "What do you mean by grievously wronged? Tell me."

"Dad," said the monks, "we don't know where you came from, though you seem quite familiar to us. We dare not tell you here. Please come to our humble residence, and we'll disclose our woes."

"That's more appropriate," said the elder. "Let's go to their monastery and we can then question them carefully." They went together up to the monastery gate where they found in gold letters this horizontal inscription:

Golden Light Monastery Built by Imperial Command

As master and disciples entered the gate, they saw *cold scented lamps in aged halls; windswept leaves in vacant corridors. Atop the clouds, 1000-foot pagoda; to nourish one's nature, a few pine trees. The ground's flower-strewn but no guests pass by; the eaves are amply screened by spider webs. Drums mounted in vain; bells hung up unused; the walls are dust-covered, the murals blurred. The lectern's so quiet for no monk is seen; the Chan Hall's silent, only birds you'll meet. Such lamentable plight! Such endless, lonely pain! Though incense urns are before the gods placed, the ashes cool, the petals wilt, and all are vain.* Grief-stricken, Tripitaka could not restrain the tears welling up in his eyes. Wearing the cangues and locks, the monks pushed open the door to the main hall and invited our elder to worship a god. After he entered the hall, the elder could only offer the incense of his heart, though he touched his face to the ground three times. Then they went to the back where they found another six or seven young priests chained to the pillar before the abbot's hall, an intolerable sight for Tripitaka. When they reached the abbot's hall, the monks leading the way all came to respect, and 1 of them asked, "The features of our Venerable Dads aren't all the same. Do you happen to be those who've come from the Great Tang in the Land of the East?"

"You monks must know the magic of foreknowledge without divination," said Pilgrim, laughing. "We're indeed such persons. But how did you recognise us?"

"Dad," said the monk, "what sort of foreknowledge without divination do you think we really possess? It's just that we've been grievously wronged and there's nowhere for us to turn for justice except to call on Heaven and Earth day in and day out. I suppose we must've disturbed the gods for each of us had a dream last night where we're told that a holy monk arriving from the Great Tang in the Land of the East would be able to save our lives. Our grievances, too would be rectified. When we came upon the strange appearances of you Venerable Dads today, we're thus able to recognise you."

Highly pleased by these words, Tripitaka said, "What's the name of your region here? What sort of grievances do you've?"

The monks all knelt down again and 1 of them said, "Holy Dad, this city's called the Sacrifice Kingdom and it's a major city in the Western Territories. In years past, barbaric tribes of all four quarters came to pay us tribute: the Yuetuo Kingdom to the south, the Qoco Kingdom to the north, the State of Western Liang to the east, and the Bimbo Kingdom to the west. They brought annually fine jade and lustrous pearls, beautiful girls, and spirited horses. Without our use of arms or expeditionary forces, all of them would of their own accord venerate us as the superior state."

"If they do that," said Tripitaka, "it must be because you've an upright king, worthy civil officers, and noble military officers."

"Holy Dad," said the monk, "neither our civil officers are worthy, nor our military officers noble and the king isn't upright either. It's to do with this Golden Light Monastery of ours that'd from the beginning auspicious clouds covering our treasure pagoda and hallowed mists rising from our whole edifice. At night beams of light flashed from the building and people as far away as ten thousand miles had seen them; by day, coloured airs sprouted and all four of our surrounding nations had witnessed them. This is why we've been regarded as the divine capital of a Heavenly prefecture, and why we've enjoyed the tributes of the four barbaric tribes. But three years ago, during the first day of the first month of winter, a rainstorm of blood descended upon us at the hour of midnight. By morning every household was fearful; every home was grief-stricken. The various ministers made haste to memorialise to the king with all sorts of speculation on why such chastisement was sent by the Heavenly Lord. At the time, Daoists were summoned to say their mass and Religious their scriptures in order to pacify Heaven and Earth. Who would have suspected however, that, since our treasure pagoda of gold had been defiled by that rainstorm, the foreign nations would stop coming to pay tribute these last two years? Our king wanted to send out expeditionary forces but he was restrained by the ministers who accused the monks of this monastery of stealing the treasure in the pagoda. That was the reason they gave for the disappearance of the auspicious clouds and hallowed mists and for the cessation of tribute on the part of the foreign nations. The dim-witted ruler never gave the matter another thought; at once those venal officials had us monks arrested and inflicted on us endless tortures and interrogations. There were altogether three generations of monks in this monastery; two of them, unable to withstand such terrible treatments, died. The rest of us are now locked up in cangues and locks, still accused of this crime. Think of it, Venerable Dad – how could we dare be so bold as to steal the treasure in the pagoda? We beg you in your great compassion to have regard for the special affinity of our kind. Vouchsafe your great mercy and exercise your mighty religion power to save our lives."

When Tripitaka heard this, he nodded his head and sighed, saying, “There are certainly hidden aspects to this matter that have not yet come to light. For one thing, the court has been remiss in its rule, and for another, all of you may be faced with a fated calamity. But if it was the shower of blood sent by Heaven that had defiled the treasure pagoda, why didn’t you people at the time prepare a memorial to present to your ruler, so that you’d be spared such affliction?”

“Holy Dad,” said the monk, “we’re only common folks. How could we know the will of Heaven? Moreover, if our senior colleagues could not determine what to do, how would we be able to settle the matter?”

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “what time is it now?”

“About the hour of *shen*,”<sup>7</sup> replied Pilgrim. “I’d like to have an audience with the ruler,” said Tripitaka, “so that our travel rescript may be certified. But we’ve not yet fully understood what has happened to the monks here, and it’s hard for me to speak to the ruler about this matter. After I left Chang’an, I made a vow in the Temple of the Law Gate that on my journey to the West, I’d burn incense in every temple, I’d bow to God everywhere and sweep a pagoda whenever I came across a pagoda.<sup>8</sup> Today we’ve met you monks who’ve been grievously wronged because of a treasure pagoda. Why don’t you people fetch me a new broom? Let me bathe first, and then I’ll go up there to sweep it clean. Let me see if I can discover exactly what has caused the defilement and the loss of the pagoda’s brilliance. Once we determine that, we can memorialise to their ruler and deliver them from this affliction.”

When they heard this, some of those monks carrying the cangues and locks dashed into the kitchen and picked up a kitchen knife to hand over to 8 Rules, saying, “Dad, please take the knife and see if you can sever the chains on the pillar over there, so that those young priests can be freed. They can then go to prepare a meal and a scented bath for the holy dads here. We’ll go to the streets to beg a new broom for him to use to sweep the pagoda.”

“It’s so easy to open locks!” said 8 Rules, chuckling. “There’s no need for a knife or an axe. Ask that hairy-faced dad. He’s a seasoned lock-picker.”

Pilgrim indeed went forward and, using the lock-opening magic, gave the shackles a wipe with his hand. Immediately, all the chains and locks fell to the ground. Those young priests ran into the kitchen to scrub the pots and pans and prepare a meal. After Tripitaka and his disciples ate, it was gradually turning dark when some of these monks still cangue and locked came in with two brooms. Tripitaka was very pleased. As he spoke with them, another young priest came in with a lamp to invite him to go take his bath. By then the moon and the stars were shining brilliantly outside as the sound of bamboo drums started from the watchtowers. Truly at *4 walls the cold wind arose; in every house the lamps burned bright. Shutters in all six lanes went up; doors of 3 markets were shut tight. Fishing boats retired to the woods; ploughmen their short ropes forsook. The woodcutter’s axe now rested; a student recited his book.* After he finished bathing, Tripitaka put on a short-sleeve undershirt that he tied with a sash. He changed into a pair of soft-soled shoes and picked up a new broom. “You’d all go to sleep,” he said to the monks, “and let me go sweep the pagoda.”

“If the pagoda had been defiled by a bloody rainstorm,” said Pilgrim, “and if it had grown dark for such a long time already, some vicious things might have been bred up there. If you go up all by yourself in this cold, windy night, you may run into something unexpected. How about letting old monkey be your companion?”

“Very good! Very good!” replied Tripitaka. Each of them thus took up a broom. They went first to the main hall and lit the glass chalice and burned fresh incense. Tripitaka went to his knees before a god image and prayed saying, “Your disciple, Chen Xuanzang’s sent to worship god who’s thus come and gone in the Spirit Mountain and ask for scriptures by the decree of the Great Tang in the Land of the East. Arriving here at the Golden Light Monastery of the Sacrifice Kingdom, I was told by the monks of this monastery that the treasure pagoda had been defiled. The king suspected that the monks had stolen the treasure and were wrongly charged with a crime, the cause of which no one in fact had knowledge. In all earnestness therefore, your disciple’s decided to sweep this pagoda. I beg our God to reveal quickly by his mighty spirit the true source of the pagoda’s defilement so that the innocence of these mortal men can be established.”

After his prayer, he and Pilgrim opened the door of the pagoda and began to sweep it, beginning with the lowest tier. Truly this pagoda *leans ruggedly toward the sky and rises, towering, in the air. It’s justly called a pagoda of 5-coloured glass, a Sari-peak of 1000 gold; its stairs winding like a tunnel; an open cage when its doors unfold. Its treasure vase reflects the moon in the sky; golden bells ring with the wind of the sea. 1 can see the empty eave saluting the stars and the lofty top detaining the clouds. The empty eave saluting the stars creates a phoenix piercing strange rocks and flowers; the lofty top detaining the clouds brings forth a pagoda-dragon fog-entwined. 1’s gaze on top will reach 1000 miles; up there it will feel like the 9-fold Heaven. In glass lamp at the door of each tier, there is dust but no fire; on white-jade railings before every eave gather dirt and flying insects. Inside the pagoda above the votive tables, smoke and incense all extinguished; outside the windows or before the images, cobwebs opaque and widespread. There is more rat-dung in the urns than oil in the chalice. Because a treasure was in secret lost, priests have been killed, their lot made bitter and vain. Since Tripitaka wills to sweep it clean, the pagoda’s old form will of course be seen.* The Tang Monk used his broom to sweep clean one tier before going up to another tier. By the time he reached the seventh tier, it was already the hour of the 2<sup>nd</sup> watch and the elder began to tire. “You’re getting tired,” said Pilgrim. “Sit down and let old monkey do the sweeping for you.”

“How many tiers there’re on this pagoda?” asked Tripitaka.

Pilgrim replied, “I’m afraid there’re at least thirteen tiers.”

Attempting to endure his fatigue, the elder said, “I must finish sweeping it to fulfil my vow.” He swept 3 more tiers and his torso and legs ached so badly that he had to sit down on the tenth tier. “Wukong,” he said, “you sweep clean the rest of the three tiers for me and then come back down.”

Rousing his energy, Pilgrim went up to the eleventh tier, and in a moment, he ascended to the twelfth tier. As he swept the floor, he heard someone speaking on the top of the pagoda. “That’s strange! That’s strange!” said Pilgrim. “It has to be about the hour of the third watch now. How could there be anyone speaking on the pagoda top? This has to be some sort of deviant creature. Let me go and have a look.”

Dear Monkey King! Stealthily he picked up the broom and put it under his arm; hitching up his clothes, he crawled out of the door and rose into the clouds to look around. There in the middle of the thirteenth tier of the pagoda were seated two monster-spirits, and before them were placed a basin of coarse rice, a bowl, and a juice pot. They were drinking and playing the finger-guessing game.<sup>9</sup> Using his magic, Pilgrim abandoned the broom and whipped out the golden-hooped rod. He stood at the doorway and shouted, “Dear fiends! So *you* stole the treasure on the pagoda!” Terrified, the two fiendish creatures quickly got up and pelted Pilgrim with the pot and the bowl but he blocked the blows with his iron rod and said, “If I slay you, there’ll be no one to make the confession.” With the rod, he backed them against the wall until they could not move at all, and all they could say was, “Spare us! Spare us! It has nothing to do with us. Someone else took the treasure.”

Using the magic of seizure, Pilgrim grabbed them with one hand and went back to the tenth tier. “Master,” he announced, “I’ve caught the thieves who stole the treasure.” Tripitaka was just dozing: when he heard this, he was both startled and pleased. “Where did you catch them?” he asked. Pilgrim pulled the two fiends forward and made them kneel down. “They were having fun on top of the pagoda,” he said, “drinking and playing the finger-guessing game. When old monkey heard all that noise, I mounted the cloud to leap up there and block their escape with no effort at all. But I feared that if I killed them with one blow of the rod, no one would make the confession. That’s why I brought them here. Master, you can take their testimony and see where they came from and where they have stashed the treasure.”

Trembling all over, the two fiends could only utter, “Spare us!” Then one of them made this honest confession: “We’ve been sent here to patrol the pagoda by the All Saints Dragon King of the Green Wave Lagoon in the Scattered-Rock Mountain. He is called Busy Bubble, and I’m called Bubble Busy. He’s a sheet-fish spirit, and I’m a black fish spirit. This all came about because our All Saints Old Dragon once gave birth to a daughter by the name of Princess All Saints who was blessed with the loveliest features and the most extraordinary talents. She took in a husband by the name of Nine-Heads who also had vast magic powers. Year before last, he came here with the Dragon King and, exerting great divine strength, sent down a rainstorm of blood to have the treasure pagoda defiled. Then he stole the *śāriṛa* Religious treasure<sup>10</sup> from the building. Thereafter the princess also went up to the great Heaven where she stole the nine-leaved agaric that the Lady Queen Mum planted before the Hall of Divine Mists. The plant and the Religious treasure are both kept now at the bottom of the lagoon, lighting up the place with their golden beams and coloured hues night and day. Recently we received the news that there was one Sun Wukong on his way to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. We’re told not only that he has vast magic powers but also that he loves to meddle with the faults of others. That’s why we’ve been sent here frequently to patrol the area, so that we’ll be prepared when that Sun Wukong arrives.”

Laughing scornfully at what he heard, Pilgrim said, “How audacious are these cursed beasts! No wonder he sent for the Bull Demon King the other day to attend their banquet! So, he was in league with this bunch of brazen demons who specialize in evil deeds!”

Hardly had he finished speaking when 8 Rules and a few young priests holding 2 lanterns walked up from below. “Master,” he said, “why haven’t you gone to bed after you finished sweeping the pagoda? Why’re you still sitting here and talking?”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “it’s a good thing you’ve come, the treasure on the pagoda was stolen by the All Saints Old Dragon. He’s the one who sent two little fiends to patrol the pagoda here and spy on our movements but they were caught by me just now.”

“What’re their names,” asked 8 Rules, “and what sort of monster-spirits are they?”

“They just gave us a confession,” said Pilgrim. “One of them is called Busy Bubble, and the other is called Bubble Busy. One is a sheet fish spirit, and the other is a black fish spirit.” Whipping out his rake, 8 Rules wanted to strike at them, saying, “If they are monster-spirits who have made their confession, why not beat them to death? What are we waiting for?” Pilgrim said, “You’ve not thought about this. If we keep them alive, it’ll be easier for us to go speak to the king about this matter, and they can be used as informants too, for catching the thieves and recovering the treasure.”

Dear Idiot! He indeed put away the rake; he and Pilgrim then each picked up a fiend and pulled him down the pagoda. All the fiends could say was “Spare us!” 8 Rules said to them, “We’re just looking for some sheet fish and black fish like you, so that we’d make some soup for those wronged priests.”

The several young priests, in great delight, held their lanterns high to lead the elder down the pagoda. One of them ran ahead to report to the other monks, crying, “It’s great! It’s great! We’ve finally seen the day! The fiends who stole our treasure have been caught by the dads.” Pilgrim gave this order: “Bring us some iron chains, pierce their lute bones, and lock them up here. You people stand guard over them and we’ll go to sleep. We’ll dispose of them tomorrow.” Those monks indeed watched over the fiends with great care while Tripitaka and his disciples rested.

Soon it was dawn, and the elder said, “I’ll go into the court with Wukong to have our travel rescript certified.” Whereupon he changed into his brocaded cassock and put on his Vairocana hat. In full clerical attire, he strode forward, accompanied by Pilgrim who also tightened his tiger-skin kilt and straightened out his silk shirt after he took out the travel rescript. “Why aren’t you bringing along the two fiendish thieves?” asked 8 Rules. “Let us inform the king first,” said Pilgrim, “and there will be royal summoners sent here to fetch them.”

They walked before the gate of the court, and there were endless scenes of scarlet birds and yellow dragons, of divine capitals and celestial arches. Approaching the East Flower Gate, Tripitaka saluted the grand official of the gate and said, “I beg Your Honour to make this announcement for us: this humble cleric has been sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. We seek an audience with your ruler in order to have our travel rescript certified.” Willing, indeed, to grant this request, the Custodian of the Yellow Gate went before the steps to memorialise: “There are two monks of strange features and attire outside who claim to have been sent by the Tang court in the Land of the East of the South Jambūdāvpa Continent to go seek scriptures from God in the West. They wish to have an audience with our king in order to have their travel rescript certified.”

On hearing this, the king gave the order to have the visitors summoned, and the elder thus led Pilgrim to walk into court. When the civil and military officials caught sight of Pilgrim, they all became frightened, some saying that this was a monkey priest while others observing that he was a monk with a thunder-god beak. All of them were so alarmed that they dared not stare at him for long. While the elder went through elaborate ritual before the steps to salute the throne, Pilgrim stood with hands folded before him and remained unmoved. Then the elder spoke: “Your priestly subject has been sent as a scripture pilgrim by the Great Tang nation in the Land of the East of the South Jambūdāvpa Continent to worship God at the Great Thunderclap Monastery in the India of the West. Our journey takes us to your noble region, and we dare not pass through without permission. We’ve with us a travel rescript that we beg you to certify before we leave.”

Greatly pleased by what he heard, the king gave the order for the sage monk of the Tang court to ascend the Hall of Golden Chimes. A cushion of embroidered silk was granted him as his seat. Going up the hall by himself, the elder first presented the rescript before he took the seat. After the king had read carefully the rescript from beginning to end, he was delighted. He said to Tripitaka, “Though the Great Tang Emperor was indisposed, he was fortunate to have been able to select a noble priest who was willing to seek scriptures from God without any fear of the lengthy distance. But the priests of our region are good only for stealing, for bringing ruin upon our nation and ruler.” When he heard this, Tripitaka folded his hands before his chest and said, “In what way do they bring ruin upon your nation and ruler?”

“This kingdom of ours,” said the king, “is a superior state of the Western Territories. In the past, the four barbaric tribes frequently came to us to pay tribute, all on account of the Golden Light Monastery within our kingdom. In that monastery was a treasure pagoda of yellow gold, the lustre and brilliance of which filled the sky. Recently however, the larcenous monks of the monastery secretly have stolen the treasure, and for the last three years, there was no brilliance at all. The foreign nations during this time also stopped their tributes, and this matter has aroused our deepest hatred.”

“Your Majesty,” said Tripitaka with a smile, his hands still folded, “*To err by a hair’s breadth’s to miss by a thousand miles!* When this humble priest arrived at your Heavenly domain last evening, I caught sight of some ten priests, all carrying cangues and wearing locks, the moment I entered the city gate. I questioned them on their crime, and they told me that they were innocent victims from the Golden Light Monastery. An even more thorough investigation I made after my arrival at their monastery disclosed that the priests there had nothing to do with this, for when I swept the pagoda at night, I caught the fiendish thieves who stole the treasure.”

“Where are these fiendish thieves?” asked the king, highly pleased. Tripitaka said, “They have been locked up by my humble disciple in the Golden Light Monastery.”

Hurriedly issuing a golden tablet the king gave this decree: “Let the Embroidered-Uniform Guard bring back the fiendish thieves from the Golden Light monastery. We’ll ourselves then interrogate them.”

“Your Majesty,” said Tripitaka, “though you may want to send the Imperial Guard, it is better that my humble disciple accompany him.”



"Where is your noble disciple?" asked the king.

Pointing with his finger, Tripitaka said, "He's the one standing by the jade steps." When the king saw Pilgrim, he was astounded, saying, "The sage monk has such elegant features! How is it that your noble disciple has that sort of appearance?" When the Great Sage Sun heard this, he spoke up in a loud voice, "Your Majesty, *don't judge a man by his face, nor measure the sea by a vase*. If you only cared for men of good appearance, how could you seize the fiendish thieves?" These words of Pilgrim turned the king's astonishment to delight, and he said, "What the sage monk says is true indeed. We'll not select talents according to their appearances. All we want is to catch the thieves and return the treasure back to the pagoda." He then gave the order for the court attendant to prepare a canopied carriage, and for the Imperial Guard to wait on the sage monk in all diligence when he went to fetch the fiendish thieves.

The court attendant at once sent for a huge carriage and a yellow umbrella. The Embroidered-Uniform Guard also summoned the guardsmen; Pilgrim was placed in the carriage that was borne by four people in front and four behind while four outriders shouted to clear the way as they headed toward the Golden Light Monastery. This entourage soon disturbed the populace of the whole city, and not one failed to show up to try to see the sage monk and the fiendish thieves.

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk heard the shouts for clearing the way, they thought that some official sent by the king had arrived, and they hurried out of the monastery to receive him. Pilgrim, they discovered, was the one sitting in the carriage. Facing him, Idiot said, giggling, "Elder Brother, you've acquired your true form!"

Pilgrim descended from the carriage and took hold of 8 Rules asking, "What do you mean?"

8 Rules replied, "You've a yellow umbrella above you and your carriage's borne by eight carriers. Don't these betoken the office of Monkey King? That's why I said you've acquired your true form."

"Don't make fun of me!" said Pilgrim.

He untied the two fiendish creatures so that they could be taken to see the king. "Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "please take us along."

"But you'd stay here to guard the luggage and the horse," said Pilgrim. One of the priests who were still cangued and locked said, "Let the dads go to enjoy imperial favour. We'll remain here to watch your things."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "let us go report to the king first. Then we'll come to free you."

8 Rules grabbed 1 of the fiendish thieves while Sand-monk took hold of the other; the Great Sage Sun climbed into the carriage as before. The entire entourage returned to court with the fiendish thieves in custody. In a moment, they arrived before the white jade steps to address the king: "We've brought the fiendish thieves here."

Coming down from his dragon couch, the king led the Tang Monk and the various officials, both civil and military, to look at the fiends: one had pouch-jowls and black scales, a pointed mouth and sharp teeth while the other had smooth skin and a huge belly, a large mouth and long whiskers. Though they had legs that could walk, they barely looked human. "Where are you from, monster-spirits," asked the king, "and in what year did you invade our domain to steal our treasure? How many thieves are there altogether, and what are their names? Make your confession in truth and detail."

The 2 fiends went to their knees before him (they did not seem to mind the pain though their necks were dripping with blood) and made this confession: *"Three years ago on the first of the seventh month, there's one All Saints Dragon King who led many of his kindred to settle southeast of this state from here miles some one hundred. His lagoon's called Green Wave; mountain, Scattered-Rock. To him was born a daughter most pretty and seductive who took a husband named Nine-Heads of magic powers matchless. Learning of your pagoda's treasure, he joined the Dragon King as bandits. First they sent down a bloody rainstorm; then the pagoda's sari they lifted. Now it lights up the dragon palace making bright days out of darkness. As well the princess plotted in deep and silent secret; she stole the Queen Mum's agaric with which the lagoon's treasure she nourished. We two are no bandit leaders: the Dragon King sent only private. Tonight we've been captured; our confession's most honest."*

"If you've made your confession," said the king, "why don't you reveal your names?" One of the fiends said, "I'm called Busy Bubble, and he's called Bubble Busy. I'm a sheet fish spirit, and he's a black fish spirit." The king instructed the Embroidered-Uniform Guard to jail them, after which he issued this decree: "The monks of the Golden Light Monastery will be freed at once from their cangues and locks. Let the Court of Imperial Entertainments prepare a banquet quickly, and we'll thank the sage monks in the Unicorn Hall for capturing these thieves. We'll also discuss the matter of asking the sage monks to arrest the bandit chief."

The Court of Imperial Entertainments at once prepared a banquet composed of both vegetarian and meat dishes. After the king invited the Tang Monk and his three disciples to take their seats in the Unicorn Hall, he asked, "Sage Monk, what is your honoured style?"

"The secular family of this humble cleric," replied the Tang Monk with folded hands, "goes by the name of Chen, and my religious name is Xuanzang. I also had bestowed on me the surname of Tang by my emperor, and my humble style is Tripitaka."

"And what are the honoured styles of your noble disciples?" asked the king.

"My disciples are without styles," said Tripitaka. "The first one is called Sun Wukong; the second, Bullseye Aware of Ability; and the third, Sand Awakened to Purity. These names were given by the Nun Guanshiyin of the South Sea. Since they made submission to this humble cleric and addressed me as master, I've also named Wukong Pilgrim. Aware of Ability I've named 8 Rules, and Awakened to Purity is now called Monk." When he finished speaking, the king asked Tripitaka to take the head table, Pilgrim Sun to take the side table to his left, and Bullseye 8 Rules with Sand-monk to take the side table to his right. Spread upon the tables were all vegetarian foods, fruits, teas, and rice. Facing them, the king took the table that had on it meat dishes while the rest of the civil and military officials occupied over a hundred tables down below, all with meat dishes. After the officials thanked the king and the disciples excused themselves to their master, they were all seated. The king lifted his cup but Tripitaka dared not drink; only the three disciples accepted the seat-taking toast. From down below came the harmonious strains of pipes and strings provided by the Office of Poems. Look at the appetite of 8 Rules! It did not matter whether fruits or vegetables were set on the table; he wolfed them down and finished them all. A little while later, additional soup and rice were brought to him, and these he also cleaned up completely. When the juice stewards came by, he never once refused the cup. And so, this banquet lasted well past the hour of noon before it ended.

As Tripitaka gave thanks for this lavish banquet, the king tugged at him to say, "This is merely to thank you for capturing the fiends. Let's change the banquet quickly to Jianzhang Palace <sup>12</sup>where we'll ask the sage monk for the plan to arrest the bandit chief and return the treasure to the pagoda."

"If you want us to do that," said Tripitaka, "there is no need for another banquet. All of us humble clerics will take leave of you, Your Majesty, and we'll go to capture the fiends."

The king however, would have none of it, and he insisted that they proceed to the Jianzhang Palace where they were fêted once more. Raising a cup of juice, the king said, "Which one of you sage monks will lead the troops to go arrest the fiends?"

"We'll send Sun Wukong our eldest disciple," said Tripitaka, and the Great Sage saluted him with folded hands to signify his obedience. "If Elder Sun is willing to go," said the king, "how many men and horses do you need? When do you want to leave the city?"

No longer able to restrain himself, 8 Rules said in a loud voice, "Who needs men and horses! Who cares what time it is! While we're still full of juice and rice, let me go with Elder Brother. We'll just stretch our hands and bring them back at once."

Highly pleased, Tripitaka said, "You're quite diligent nowadays, 8 Rules!"

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "let Brother Sand-monk protect Master. We two will go."

"If the two elders do not need men or horses," said the king, "do you want any weapons?"

"The weapons that you've," said 8 Rules, chuckling, "are of no use to us. We brothers have our own weapons that accompany us wherever we go."

On hearing this, the king asked for a large goblet of juice with which he wanted to send them off. "We'll not drink juice now," said the Great Sage Sun, "but ask the Embroidered-Uniform Guard to bring out the two little fiends. We'll take them along as informants." The king ordered them brought out at once; taking hold of the 2 fiends and mounting the wind, the 2 disciples employed the magic of traction to head for the southeast. Lo! *When Ruler and subjects saw them mounting wind and fog, they knew master and disciples to be sage monks.*

**2 monks, quelling fiends, disturb the dragon palace; the sages, destroying deviates, acquire the treasures.**

The king of the Sacrifice Kingdom and the various officials both great and small when they saw how the Great Sage Sun and 8 Rules mounted the wind and fog and glided away, each holding 1 of the little fiends, all those dukes and marquises saluted toward the sky, saying, "It's indeed the truth! Not until today did we realise that there *are* such mortals, such living Gods!" When the two disciples vanished from sight, the king then turned to thank Tripitaka and Sand-monk, saying, "This Solitary One is of fleshly eyes and mortal stock. We only thought that your worthy disciples had sufficient power to capture the fiendish thieves. Little did we realise that they are actually superior mortals who can ride the fog and mount the clouds!"

"This humble cleric," said Tripitaka, "has hardly any magic power, and he's dependent on these three lowly disciples throughout the journey." Sand-monk said, "To tell you the truth, Your Majesty, my Big Brother happens to be the converted Great Sage Equal to Heaven. Once he caused great havoc in Heaven, using a golden-hooped rod, and among one hundred celestial warriors there was none who could withstand him. Even the Jade Emperor and Laozi were intimidated by him. My Second Elder Brother is none other than the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds who has embraced the right fruit. He used to command a mighty force of eighty thousand marines of the Celestial River. Compared with them, this disciple has very little magic power but I, too, happen to be the Curtain-Raising Captain who has received the commandments. We brothers may not be very good at doing other things but if you want something like catching fiends and binding monsters, seizing thieves and arresting fugitives, taming tigers and subduing dragons, kicking down Heaven and pulling up wells – including even stirring up seas and overturning rivers – we know a little of these. As for activities such as mounting the cloud and riding the fog, calling up rain and summoning wind, moving the stars and changing the dipper, poling the mountains to chase after the moon, they are simple matters, hardly worth mentioning."

When the king heard this, he became even more respectful toward them; asking the Tang Monk to take the honoured seat, he addressed him as "Venerable God," while Sand-monk and his companions were given the title, "Nun." The civil and military officials of the entire court were all delighted while the people of the whole kingdom paid them homage, and we'll leave them for the moment.

We now tell you about the Great Sage Sun and 8 Rules who astride the violent wind, brought the 2 young fiends to the Green Wave Lagoon at the Scattered-Rock Mountain. After they stopped their clouds, the Great Sage blew a mouthful of divine breath onto his golden-hooped rod, crying, "Change!" It changed at once into a ritual razor with which he cut off the ears of the black fish spirit and the lower lip of the sheet fish spirit. After casting the fiends into the water, Pilgrim shouted to them, "Go quickly and make a report to that All Saints Dragon King. Tell him that his Venerable Dad Sun the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, has arrived. Tell him to bring out immediately the original treasure taken from the top of the Golden Light Monastery in the Sacrifice Kingdom, and the lives of his whole family will be spared. If he but utters half a no, I'll clean out this lagoon, and everyone in his household, both old and young, will be executed!"

Those two little fiends were only too glad to have their lives back. Enduring their pain and dragging along their iron chains, they fled by darting into the water. The spirits of fishes, shrimps, crabs, sea turtles, iguanas, and huge tortoises were so startled that they swarmed around them and asked, "Why're you two draped with ropes and chains?"

1 of the 2 hands still hugging the sides of his head, kept wagging his tail and shaking his head; the other 1 holding his mouth, stamped his feet and beat his chest. In a noisy throng, they went up to the palace of the Dragon King and the 2 made this report: "Great King, disaster!"

The All Saints Dragon King was just drinking juice with Nine-Heads, his son-in-law. When he saw them dashing in, he put down his glass and inquired about the disaster. "We're on patrol last night," said 1 of the 2 fiends, "when we're caught by the Tang Monk and Pilgrim Sun who happened to be sweeping the pagoda. We're in fact bound by iron chains. This morning we're taken to see the king after which that Pilgrim and Bullseye Eight Rules hauled the two of us back here; one of us had his ears cut off and the other, his lower lip. They then threw us into the water and told us to make this report. They're demanding from us the treasure taken from the pagoda top."

When they gave a thorough account of what had happened and the old dragon heard the name Pilgrim Sun, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, he was so terrified that his spirit fled his body and soul floated up to the 9-fold Heaven. Shaking all over, he said to 9-Heads, "Oh, worthy son-in-law! It may be all right if another person shows up but if it's he, then we're in a bad situation!"

"Relax, great dad-in-law!" said the son-in-law with a laugh. "Since his youth your foolish son-in-law's mastered the rudiments of the martial arts. Within the four seas he's moreover met quite a few stalwart warriors. Why fear *him*? Let me go out now and fight three rounds with him. I promise you that that fellow will salute in submission, not daring even to look up!" *Dear fiend!* He leaped up at once and put on his armour, picking up a weapon which had the name of crescent-tooth spade. 'Striding out of the palace, he opened a path in the water and rose to the surface crying, "What sort of Great Sage Equal to Heaven's here? Come over quickly and yield your life!" Standing on the shore, Pilgrim and 8 Rules stared at the monster-spirit to see how he was attired. *He wore a bright silver helmet, its lustre whiter than snow; he had on a cuirass of steel luminous as autumn's frost that topped a damask martial robe patterned like coloured clouds enfolding jade. His waist had a belt of rhinoceros grain that seemed like a python spotted with gold. His hands held the crescent-tooth spade flashing with beams of light; feet wore 2 crocodile-skin boots that parted water and waves. Seen from afar he had a head and a face; drawing near, he seemed human all around. Eyes in front, behind, he could see all 8 quarters. Two mouths on the left and right, nine mouths talking at once! One shout he gave and it shook the distant void as if a crane's cry had punctured the stars.* When the monster-spirit found no reply, he shouted once more: "Who's the Great Sage Equal to Heaven?"

Giving his golden fillet a pinch and his iron rod a bounce, Pilgrim replied, "Old monkey's the person."

The fiend asked, “Where do you live? Where did you come from originally? How did you get to the Sacrifice Kingdom to become the guard of the pagoda for that king? How dare you capture my captains and work further violence by provoking battle on my treasure mountain?”

“You thievish fiend!” scolded Pilgrim. “So you don’t recognise your Grandpa Sun! Come up here and listen to my recital. *Mount Flower-Fruit’s where old monkey once had lived at the great ocean’s Water-Curtain Cave. I’ve wrought a perfect body since my youth; Emperor Jade made me Sage Equal-to-Heaven. When I caused great havoc in the Dipper Hall, the gods in Heaven found me hard to beat. A god asked to lend his wondrous might, used his boundless wisdom transcendently. In a somersault wager – a test of might – his hand formed a mountain to have me pressed beneath it till now a full five centuries. My life’s spared when Guanyin intervened: Great Tang’s Tripitaka would go to the West to seek on Spirit Mountain the Religious verse. To give him protection I found release and cultivation purging imps and fiends. At Sacrifice Kingdom of the West we met priests wrongly blamed, three generations all. In mercy we inquired about the cause and learned the pagoda had lost its light. My master swept it to get to the truth: the night reached third watch when all sounds had ceased, we caught two monsters who at once confessed. They claimed, you’d all the treasure stolen; the gang of thieves even had a dragon king to which a princess added her name, All Saints. By raining blood on the pagoda’s beams, she took someone’s treasure for her own use. That true statement before the court obtained, we sped to this place by the king’s command that we might find you and provoke a fight. There’s no need to ask for Dad Sun’s name. Return the treasure quickly to the king and we’ll spare your kin’s lives both old and young. If you’re so foolish as to want to strive, I’ll drain your water, topple your mountain, and stamp you out!*”

When the son-in-law heard these words, he smiled scornfully and said, “So, you’re a monk on your way to fetch scriptures. Don’t you’ve anything more important to do than to meddle in someone’s affairs? You’re to seek your scriptures from God, and I’m the one who steals treasures. What has that to do with you? Why must you come here to fight with me?”

“This thievish fiend,” said Pilgrim, “has very little understanding! Of course, I’m not a recipient of the king’s favour, nor do I feed on his water or rice, and thus I’m not obliged to serve him. But you stole not only his treasure and defiled his pagoda, you also brought suffering to the priests of the Golden Light Monastery. They belong, after all, to the same community as we. How could I not exert my strength on their behalf and bring their injustice to light?”

“In that case,” said the son-in-law, “you must want to do battle. As the proverb says, ‘War’s an unkindly act.’ When I raise my hands, I fear I’ll not spare you. I may take your life all of a sudden and that may upset your scripture enterprise!”

Enraged, Pilgrim shouted, “You brazen thievish fiend! What power do you’ve that you dare mouth such big words? Come up here and have a taste of your dad’s rod!”

Not in the least intimidated, the son-in-law parried the blow with his crescent-tooth spade; a marvellous battle thus broke out on top of that Scattered-Rock Mountain. *Monsters stole treasures and the heap grew dark. Pilgrim caught fiends and informed the king. Into the water 2 little fiends fled; the old dragon took counsel, all in dread. His son-in-law, 9-Heads would flaunt his might; he armed himself to go to show his power and roused the Great Sage Equal to Heaven’s ire whose iron rod, upraised, was hard and strong. That fiend had on 9 heads 18 eyes all ablaze both back and front; this Pilgrim whose steely arms could raise 1000 pounds did spread auspicious rays around. The spade looked like the moon at the first stroke of yang; <sup>2</sup>the rod seemed like frost flying over 10000 miles. The rod met the spade as both strove to win but none had yet won on this battlefield.* Charging back and forth, the 2 of them fought for more than thirty rounds but no decision could be reached. Bullseye 8 Rules was standing all this time before the mountain slope; he waited until the battle had reached its sweetest moment before he lifted high his muckrake and brought it down hard on the back of the monster-spirit. The fiend possessed nine heads, and on each one of them he had eyes that could see clearly. When he saw 8 Rules coming at him at the back, he immediately used the lower part of the spade to block the rake while the upper part parried the iron rod. They fought thus for another six or seven rounds when the monster could no longer withstand the double offensive, front and back. He somersaulted at once into the air and changed into his original form: it was a 9-headed insect, exceedingly ugly and ferocious. *Look at his appearance!* You’d be scared to death! He had *feathers like brocade spread out, a stout-ish body with curly fleece. His size at least 12 feet in length – a shape like the turtle’s or iguana’s. His 2 feet were pointed and sharp like hooks; 9 heads joined together to form a ring. He could fly so well when he spread his wings that even the roc was no match for his strength. Crying out he could shake the Heaven’s edge, able to call louder than a mythic crane. With eyes flashing beams of golden light, his was a proud sight unlike the common bird.* Horrified by what he saw, 8 Rules cried, “Elder Brother! I’ve never seen such a vicious thing in all my life! Which creature of blood and breath would bring forth a beast like this?”

“It’s rare! It’s rare, all right!” replied Pilgrim. “Let me get up there to strike him.”

Dear Great Sage! Quickly mounting the auspicious cloud, he leaped into the air and aimed a blow of his iron rod at the creature’s heads. To display his abilities, that fiendish creature spread his wings and flew to one side. Rolling over, he suddenly darted down the side of the mountain as another head popped out from the middle of his torso. A huge, gaping mouth like a butcher bowl caught hold of 8 Rules’ bristles with one bite. Tugging and pulling his victim, he hauled him into the water of the Green Wave Lagoon. When he reached the dragon palace, he changed back into his previous form and threw 8 Rules on the ground. “Little ones, where’re you?” he cried.

Those spirits of mackerels, cutlers, carps, and perches along with the turtle, iguana, and sea turtle-fiends all surged forward, shouting, “We’re here!”

“Take this priest,” said the son-in-law, “and tie him up over there. I want to avenge our soldiers who were sent on patrol.”

The raucous mob of spirits carried 8 Rules inside as a delighted old dragon king came out saying, “Worthy son-in-law, you’ve made great merit! How did you manage to capture him?”

After the son-in-law gave a thorough account of what took place, the old dragon immediately ordered a banquet to celebrate this victory. Pilgrim Sun was quite dismayed when he saw how 8 Rules had been captured by the monster-spirit. “This is a formidable fellow!” he thought to himself. “I’d like to go back to see Master in the court but I’m afraid the king would laugh at me. If I make noises to provoke battle again, I’ll have to face them single-handedly. Moreover, I’m not used to doing business in water. I’d better transform myself to go inside and see what that fiend is going to do to Idiot. If there’s a chance, I’ll smuggle him out again so that we may proceed with our business.” Dear Great Sage! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he shook his body, changed into a crab to splash into the water, and went before the towered gateway. This was a familiar way to him for he had travelled it before when he spied on the Bull Demon King and stole his golden-eye beast. After he crawled sideways through the arch, Pilgrim saw inside the old Dragon King drinking merrily with the nine-headed insect and other members of their family. Not daring to go near them, Pilgrim crawled over to the east corridor where there were several shrimp and crab spirits frolicking. After he had listened to their chatter for a while, Pilgrim imitated their manner of speech and asked, “That priest with a long horn caught by our venerable son-in-law, has he died?”

“Not yet,” the spirits replied. “The one tied up in the west corridor and moaning, isn’t he the one?”

On hearing this, Pilgrim crawled silently over to the west corridor, and indeed he discovered Idiot bound to a pillar and moaning. “Eight Rules,” whispered Pilgrim as he approached him, “you recognise me?” When 8 Rules heard the voice, he knew it was Pilgrim and said, “Elder Brother, what shall we do? I’ve been caught by this fellow instead!” When Pilgrim glanced around and saw no one, he snapped the ropes with his claws and told 8 Rules to leave. After he was freed, Idiot said, “Elder Brother, my weapon was taken by him. What are we to do?”

“Do you know where he has put it?” asked Pilgrim, and 8 Rules replied, “It must have been taken up to the main hall by that fiend.”

Pilgrim said to him, “Go beneath the towered gateway and wait for me.” Fleeing for his life, 8 Rules slipped out quietly while Pilgrim turned and crawled up to the main hall once more. A luminous object he saw on the left side was actually the rake of 8 Rules. Using the magic of Body Concealment, he stole it and went to the towered gateway. “Eight Rules, take your weapon,” he said. After Idiot took the rake, he said, “Elder Brother, you leave first and let Old bull fight his way into the palace. If I win, I’ll seize their entire family. If I’m defeated, I’ll flee outside and you can come to my assistance by the edge of the lagoon.” Highly pleased, Pilgrim told him to be careful. “No fear,” said 8 Rules, “for I do have some abilities in water.” Pilgrim left him and swam back to the surface of the water.

Straightening out his black cotton shirt and gripping his rake with both hands, our 8 Rules gave a shout and fought his way into the palace. Those aquatic relatives, both young and old, were so startled that they dashed up to the main hall, screaming, “It’s terrible! That long-horn priest has broken out of the ropes and he’s attacking us!” The old dragon, the nine-headed insect, and their family members were hardly prepared for this; jumping up, they scattered in every direction and tried to hide themselves. Idiot however, had no regard for life or death; crashing into the main hall, he wielded his rake to fracture doors, demolish tables and chairs, and shatter all those drinking utensils. A testimonial poem for him says:

*Wood-Mum’s caught by a water fiend; Mind Monkey unyielding, searched hard for him and used a clever trick to pick the lock.*

*They then displayed their power and deepest ire.*

*The son-in-law with his princess quickly hid; the Dragon King fell silent in fear and dread.*

*As palatial arches and windows broke up, dragon sons and grandsons all lost their wits.*

This time the tortoise-shelled screens were pulverized by 8 Rules and the coral plants were smashed to pieces. After he had safely hidden the princess inside, the nine-headed insect grabbed his crescent-tooth spade to rush back to the front palace, shouting, “Lawless ape! How dare you be so insolent as to frighten my kin?”

“You thievish fiend!” scolded 8 Rules. “How dare you capture me? It’s not my fault now! It’s *you* who have invited me to bust up your household. Return the treasures quickly so that I can go back to see the king. That’ll be the end of it. Otherwise, I’ll definitely not spare the lives of your entire family!” The fiend of course was not about to yield. Clenching his teeth, he plunged into battle with 8 Rules. Only then did the old dragon manage to collect himself sufficiently to lead his son and grandson, armed with scimitars and spears, to mount an attack also. When 8 Rules saw that the tide was turning against him, he dealt a weak blow with his rake before turning to flee, followed by the old dragon and his companions. In a moment, they all darted out of the water, bobbing up and down on the surface of the lagoon. Pilgrim Sun stood waiting on the shore. When all at once he saw 8 Rules leaving the water, chased by his opponents, he quickly rose on cloud and fog and wielded his iron rod, crying, “Don’t run away!” <sup>1</sup> blow and the old dragon’s head was all smashed up. *Alas! As blood spilled in the lagoon, red water swelled. The corpse floated on the waves with dying scales.* The dragon son and grandson were so terrified that they all fled for their lives. Only the son-in-law, Nine-Heads, retrieved the corpse and retreated to the palace. Pilgrim and 8 Rules however, did not give chase immediately; they went back to the shore instead to talk about what had happened. “This fellow’s will to fight’s been blunted now,” said 8 Rules. “With my rake, I fought my way in and caused tremendous wreckage. They were frightened out of their wits. I was just fighting with that son-in-law when the old dragon chased me out. It’s a good thing that you beat him to death. When they get back inside, they’ll undoubtedly prepare for mourning and the funeral and certainly not come out again. It’s getting late also. What’ll we do?”

“Why worry about the time?” said Pilgrim. “You’d make use of this opportunity and go down to attack them once more. We must recover the treasure before we can return to the court.” Idiot however, had turned slothful and indolent, refusing to go with all sorts of excuses. “Brother,” urged Pilgrim, “there’s no need for all your deliberations. Just entice them to come as before and I’ll attack them.”

As the two were conversing like that, they suddenly saw a vast expanse of dark fog moved by a churning, violent gale from the east toward the south. When Pilgrim took a more careful look, he found that it was Erlang of Illustrious Sagacity travelling with the Six Brothers of Plum Mountain.<sup>3</sup> Leading hawks and hounds, they were also poling foxes, hares, deer, and antelopes. Each of them had a curved bow dangling from his waist and a sharp blade in his hand as they sped forward astride the wind and fog. “Eight Rules,” said Pilgrim, “those seven sages happen to be my bond-brothers. We’d detain them and ask them to help us do battle. If we succeed, it’ll be a wonderful opportunity for us.”

“If they’re your brothers,” replied 8 Rules, “we’d indeed ask them to stay.”

“But they have in their midst Big Brother Illustrious Sagacity,” said Pilgrim, “who once defeated me. I’m a little embarrassed about showing myself abruptly to him. Why don’t you block the path of their clouds and say, ‘Lord Mortal, please stop for a moment. The Great Sage Equal to Heaven, is here to pay you respect.’ When he hears that I’m here, he will certainly stop. When he settles down, it’ll be easier for me to see him.”

Idiot indeed mounted the clouds and rose quickly to the peak of the mountain. “Lord Mortal,” he cried with a loud voice, “please slow your horses and chariots. The Great Sage Equal to Heaven, wishes to see you.” On hearing this, that Holy Dad gave the order for the six brothers to stop. After they met 8 Rules, he asked, “Where is the Great Sage Equal to Heaven?”

8 Rules said, “He awaits your summons below there in the mountain.”

“Brothers,” said Erlang, “please invite him to come here.”

The 6 brothers, being Kang, Zhang, Rao, Li, Guo, and Zhi, all ran out of the camp and cried, “Elder Brother Sun Wukong, Big Brother requests your presence.”

Pilgrim went forward and, after he greeted each of them, they went up the mountain together. He was met by the Holy Dad Erlang who extended his hands to him and said, “Great Sage, you’re delivered from the great ordeal and received the commandments in the Gate of Sand. The days may be counted when your merit will be achieved and you’ll ascend your lotus throne. You’re to be congratulated!”

“Hardly,” said Pilgrim. “I received great kindness from you in the past, and I’ve yet to repay you. Though I’ve been delivered from my ordeal and am now journeying toward the West, I’ve no idea what sort of merit I’ll accomplish. We’re passing through at this moment the Sacrifice Kingdom, and in order to rescue some priests from their calamity, we’ve come here to capture fiends and demand the return of a treasure. By accident we saw the noble entourage of Elder Brother, and we make bold to request your assistance. We’ve no knowledge as to where you’ve come from or whether you’ll be pleased to grant us our wish.”

“Because I’d nothing to do,” said Erlang with a smile, “I went hunting with the brothers, from which we’re just returning. The Great Sage is most kind in asking us to stop that is ample proof of how greatly he cherishes an old friend. If you want me to help you defeat some fiends, dare I not obey you? But what fiendish thieves are occupying this region?”

“You must have quite forgotten, Big Brother,” said one of the six sages. “This is the Scattered-Rock Mountain, and below it is the Green Wave Lagoon, the dragon palace of All Saints.” Somewhat startled, Erlang said, “But the old dragon All Saints doesn’t cause any trouble. How would he dare steal a pagoda treasure?”

“He recently took in a son-in-law,” said Pilgrim, “a nine-headed insect who’d become a spirit. The two of them conspired together as thieves and brought down a rain shower of blood on the Sacrifice Kingdom after which they took away the *śārīra* Religious treasure on top of the Golden Light Monastery. Not perceiving the truth of the matter, the king bitterly persecuted and tortured the priests of

that monastery instead. My master in mercy was moved to sweep the pagoda during the night, during which I caught two small fiends on the top. They were sent there on patrol, and when we took them into court this morning, they made an honest confession. The king therefore asked our master to subdue the fiends, and that was how we're sent here. During our first encounter, 8 Rules was hauled away by that nine-headed insect when an additional head popped out of his torso. I went into the water by means of transformation and managed to rescue 8 Rules. We'd another fierce battle when I slew the old dragon whose corpse was taken away by that fellow and his cohorts. We're just in the midst of discussing how to provoke battle again when you and your noble companions arrived. Hence our imposition on you."

"If you did smite the old dragon," said Erlang, "this is the best time to attack them. They'll not be prepared, and we can exterminate the whole nest of them."

"That may be so," said 8 Rules, "but after all, it's getting late now."

Erlang replied, "As the military theorist says, 'an army doesn't wait for the times.' Why worry about how late it's?"

1 of the brothers, Kang spoke up: "There's no hurry, big brother. Since his family members live here, that fellow isn't about to run away. Now since Second Elder Brother Sun's our honoured guest and Stiff Bristles Bull's also returned to the right fruit, we'd have a party right now, especially when we've brought juice and food along to our camp. The little ones can start a fire and we can set it up right at this place. We may toast the two of them and enjoy a nice visit together this evening. By morning, we can then provoke battle and there'll be still plenty of time."

Exceedingly pleased, Erlang said, "Our worthy brother's spoken well!"

And he gave the order at once for the little ones to prepare the banquet. "We daren't decline the noble sentiments of all of you," said Pilgrim, "but since becoming priests, we've been observing the dietary laws. I hope we'll cause no inconvenience."

"But we've fruits and the like," replied Erlang, "and even our juices are dietary."

And so by the light of the moon and the stars, the brothers lifted their cups in friendship, using Heaven as their tent and Earth as their mat. Truly the lonely watches are long but a happy night is all too short. Soon the east turned pale with light. A few goblets of juice had given 8 Rules enormous inspiration, and rousing himself, he said, "It's about dawn. Let Old bull go into the water to provoke battle."

"Do be careful, Marshal," said Erlang. "Just trick him into coming out and we brothers will do our part."

"I know! I know!" said 8 Rules, laughing. Look at him! Tightening his clothes and gripping the rake, he used the water-division magic and leaped down there. The moment he arrived before the towered gateway, he gave a shout and fought into the palace hall.

At the time, the dragon son, having draped himself with a mourning gown of hemp, was standing guard over his dad's corpse and weeping. The dragon grandson and that son-in-law were busily preparing a coffin in the back. Shouting abuses, our 8 Rules rushed forward and his upraised hands delivered a heavy blow with his rake. Nine gaping holes at once appeared on the head of that dragon son. The dragon dame was so aghast that she ran madly inside, wailing, "That long-horn monk has killed my son also!" When he heard this, the son-in-law immediately took up his crescent-tooth spade and led the dragon grandson out to do battle. Lifting his rake to oppose them, our 8 Rules fought as he retreated, and soon they arrived on the surface of the water. All at once, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven and the seven brothers swarmed all over them, and in no time at all, the showering blows of swords and spears reduced the dragon grandson to a few meat patties.

When that son-in-law saw that things were going badly, he rolled on the ground immediately and changed back into his original form. Spreading his wings, he soared into the air. Erlang took out his golden bow, affixed a silver pellet, and sent it hurtling toward the insect. The fiend quickly flapped his wings and darted down, wanting to bite Erlang. Just when another head popped out from the middle of his torso however, the small hound of Erlang leaped into the air with a terrific bark and bit it clean off. In great pain, the fiend fled toward the North Sea. 8 Rules was about to give chase but he was stopped by Pilgrim who said, "Let's not follow him. As the proverb has it, 'The desperate fugitive should not be chased.' One of his heads has been bitten off by the small hound, and it's unlikely that he'll survive. Let me change into his appearance instead, and you open up a path in the water. Chase me into his palace. After we find the princess, we can wangle back the treasure." Erlang said, "I suppose it's all right that we don't track him down. But if this kind of creature remains in the world, it will undoubtedly bring great harm to people in posterity." Thus we've even today the blood-dripping nine-headed insect that is in fact the descendant of that creature.<sup>5</sup>

8 Rules, meanwhile, agreed to what Pilgrim told him and opened up a path in the water. Pilgrim, having changed into the appearance of the fiend, ran ahead while 8 Rules followed behind, shouting and hollering. As they drew near the dragon palace, they were met by the princess All Saints who asked, "Son-in-law, why are you in such a panic?"

"That 8 Rules has defeated me," replied Pilgrim, "and is chasing me here. I don't think I can resist him anymore. You'd better hide the treasures quickly." In such a hurry the princess, of course, could not distinguish truth from falsehood. She immediately took out from the rear hall a golden box to hand over to Pilgrim, saying, "This is the Religious treasure." After that, she took out also a white jade box and gave it to Pilgrim, saying, "This is the nine-leaf divine agaric. You take these treasures and hide them. Let me battle Bullseye 8 Rules for a few rounds just to slow him down. After you've put away the treasures, you can come out and fight with him again."

Having taken over the boxes, Pilgrim gave his face a wipe and changed back into his original form, saying, "Princess, take a good look and see if I'm the son-in-law!" Thoroughly shaken, the princess tried to make a grab for the boxes but 8 Rules rushed in and one blow of the rake on her shoulder sent her to the ground.

There was only an old dragon dame left; she turned and tried to flee, only to be caught hold of by 8 Rules. He was about to hit her with the rake, too but was stopped by Pilgrim who said, "Wait a moment. Let's not kill her. We'd take a live one back to the capital so that we may announce our merit." 8 Rules, therefore, dragged her up to the surface of the water, followed by Pilgrim holding the two boxes. He said to Erlang, "We're indebted to the authority and power of Elder Brother. We've recovered the treasures and wiped out the fiendish thieves." Erlang said, "We owe this rather to the excellent luck of the king in the first place, and to the boundless magic power of you two worthy brothers in the second. What have I done?" His brothers also said, "Since Second Elder Brother Sun has accomplished his merit, we'd leave at once."

Pilgrim could not stop thanking them; he would have liked to get them to go see the king but they steadfastly refused. The sages thus left and returned to the River of Libation. Pilgrim took up the boxes while 8 Rules dragged along the dragon dame; moving midway between cloud and fog, they reached the kingdom in an instant. Those priests who had been freed in the Golden Light Monastery were waiting outside the city. When they saw the two of them stopping their cloud and fog, they went forward, saluting, to receive them into the city. At that time, the king and the Tang Monk were conversing. Forcing himself to be bold, one of the monks ran ahead and went into the gate of the court to memorialise: "Your Majesty, the two venerable dads, Sun and Bullseye, have returned, bringing with them the treasures and the thief." On hearing this, the king left the hall quickly with the Tang Monk and Sand-monk. As he met the two disciples and praised them repeatedly for their divine merit, he also gave the command that a thanksgiving banquet be prepared. "There's no need for you to bestow on us food and drink as yet," said Tripitaka. "Let my humble disciples restore the treasure to the pagoda first. Then we may drink and feast." He then turned to Pilgrim to ask, "You two left the kingdom yesterday. How was it that you didn't return until today?" Whereupon Pilgrim gave a detailed account of how they fought with the son-in-law and the Dragon King, how they met the lord mortal, how they defeated the monster-spirits, and how they finally wangled the treasures. Tripitaka, the king, and all his civil and military officials could not have been more pleased.

"Does the dragon dame know human speech?" asked the king. 8 Rules said, "She's the wife of the Dragon King who has given birth to many sons and grandsons. How'd she not know human speech?"

"If she does," said the king, "let her give us a complete account of the robbery."

The dragon dame said, "I know nothing of stealing the Religious treasure. It was entirely the work of my deceased husband and our son-in-law, Nine-Heads. When they discovered that the radiance on top of your pagoda was emitted by a Religious relic, they brought down a rain shower of blood three years ago and therewith stole the treasure."

"How did you steal the divine agaric plant?" asked the king.

The dragon dame said, "That's the work of my daughter, Princess All Saints who sneaked into Heaven and stole from before the Hall of Divine Mists the nine-leaf divine agaric planted by the Lady Queen Mum of the West. Nourished by the divine breath of this plant, the *śārīra* would remain indestructible for a millennium and luminous in all ages. Even if you just wave it slightly on the ground or in the fields, it will emit myriad shafts of coloured rays and a thousand strands of auspicious beams. Now you've seized these things, and moreover, you've slaughtered my husband and my sons, you've done away with my son-in-law and my daughter. I beg you to spare my life."

"We're not about to spare *you*, of all persons!" said 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, "Guilt cannot be borne by an entire family. We'll spare you. But you're required to be the perpetual guardian of the pagoda for us."

"Even a good death is not as good as a wretched existence!" replied the dragon dame. "If you spare my life, you can do whatever you please with me." Pilgrim at once asked for an iron chain. After the attendant before the throne brought it out, Pilgrim pierced the lute bone of the dragon dame with the chain before saying to Sand-monk, "Invite the king to witness how we secure the pagoda."

Hurriedly asking for his carriage, the king left the court hand in hand with Tripitaka. Accompanied by many civil and military officials, they went to the Golden Light Monastery and ascended the pagoda. The *śārīra* was placed carefully inside a treasure vase on the thirteenth floor of the pagoda while the dragon dame was chained to a pillar in the centre. Pilgrim recited the magic words to summon together the local spirit of the capital, the city deity, and the guardian spirits of that monastery. Food and drink were to be brought to the dragon dame once every three days, they were told but if she ever dared misbehave, she would be executed at once. The various gods obeyed in silence. The Pilgrim used the agaric plant as a broom and swept each of the thirteen layers of the pagoda clean before returning it to the vase to nourish the *śārīra*. Thus it was the old had become the new once more with myriad shafts of coloured beams and a thousand strands of auspicious air. Once more the eight quarters could witness the radiance, and the four surrounding nations could wonder at the treasure. After they walked out of the pagoda's door, the king said, "If the old God and the three Nuns had not come this way, how could we ever get to the bottom of this affair?"

"Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, "the two words: Golden Light aren't the best for neither of these is a thing of permanence. Gold's after all an unstable substance and light's air that flickers. Since this humble priest's already exerted such efforts for you, he'd suggest that you change the monastery's name to Dragon-Subduing Monastery. It'll last forever, I assure you." At once the king ordered the name be changed and a new plaque bearing the words Dragon-Subduing Monastery Built by Imperial Command was hung across the main gate in front. He asked for an imperial banquet also and the painter to make portraits of the 4 pilgrims. Their names, too were recorded in the 5-Phoenix Tower. Thereafter, the king took the pilgrims personally in his own carriage out of the city to see them off. When they were offered gold and jade as a reward, master and disciples refused to take even a penny. Truly it was that *fiends extirpated, all realms are cleansed; the pagoda light's restored, the great earth is bright*.

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### At Bramble Ridge Aware of Ability exerted great effort; at Shrine of Sylva mortals Tripitaka discusses poetry

The king of the Sacrifice Kingdom who expressed his thanks to Tripitaka Tang and his disciples for recovering the treasure and capturing the fiends by offerings of jade and gold to them that they refused to accept. The king therefore ordered the attendant before the throne to have two suits of clothing made for each of the pilgrims, according to the style that they had been wearing. Two pairs of shoes and socks and two silk sashes were also made for each person. In addition to these, dried goods – both baked and roasted foods – were also prepared. After their travel rescript had been certified, the king called for the imperial cortege; many civil and military officials, the people of the entire capital, and the monks of the Dragon-Subduing Monastery followed him to send the four out of the city, accompanied by the sonorous sounds of pipes and drums. When they had gone for some twenty miles, they took leave of the king first while the rest of the officials and people retired after another twenty miles. Those priests from the Dragon-Subduing Monastery however, refused to turn back even after walking with the pilgrims for some fifty or sixty miles, a few insisting that they would travel with the pilgrims to the Western Heaven, and a few others saying that they would practice austerities while serving the pilgrims on their way. When Pilgrim saw that none of them was willing to turn back, he had to use his magic. Pulling off some thirty strands of his hair, he blew a mouthful of divine breath on them, crying, "Change!" They changed at once into a herd of ferocious striped tigers, prowling and growling that had the main road completely blocked. Only then did these monks become frightened and dared not proceed, so that the Great Sage could tell his master to urge his horse forward. In a little while, they faded in the distance, and the monks burst into loud wailing, all crying, "Most gracious and kind dads! You're unwilling to save us because we've no affinity!" Leaving those monks behind, the master and his 3 disciples headed toward the West. Only after they had gone for quite a distance did Pilgrim retrieve his hairs. Truly the seasons were quick to change, and soon it was the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It was a pleasant time to travel, neither too hot nor too cold. As they walked along, they came upon a long ridge over which the main road had to pass. When Tripitaka reined in his horse to look at the place, he saw that the ridge was covered with brambles and clogged with creepers and vines. Though there was a faint trace of the road, it was flanked by the prickly thorns of brambles crowding in from left and right. "Disciples," the Tang Monk called out, "how could we walk through this road?"

"Why not?" asked Pilgrim.

"Oh, disciples!" said the Tang Monk. "Below is the faded path; above are the brambles. Only reptiles or insects creeping on the ground can get through. Even for you it means walking while bending double. How'd I possibly stay on horseback?"

"Don't worry," said 8 Rules. "Let me show you my ability to rake firewood and spread open the brambles for you. Don't speak of riding a horse. Even if you're to ride a carriage, you'd be able to get through."

"Though you may've the strength," said Tripitaka, "you can't last over a long distance. I wonder how wide this ridge is. Where can we find the energy?"

Pilgrim replied, "No need to discuss this anymore. Let me go and have a look." He leaped into the air and what he saw was an endless stretch. Truly *they cloak the earth and fade into the sky, gather mist and hold up rain – these soft, dishevelled mats flanking the road, jade-green tops shading the mount. Dense and luxuriant the newly sprouted leaves; rank and prolific they thrive and bloom. They*

seem from a distance to have no end; close up they look like a vast green cloud. Furry and lush, in fresh dark green, they rustle loudly in the wind as the bright sun makes them glow. In their midst are pines, cedars, and bamboos; many plums, willows, and mulberries even more. Creepers wind around old trees and wisteria, the drooping willows. Laced together like a prop, they seem like a matted cot. There are flowers blooming like brocade and wild buds send fragrance far away. Which man’s not met some brambles during his life? Who’s ever seen such vast thickets of the West? After he had stared at the region for a long time, Pilgrim lowered his cloud and said, “Master, this ridge’s enormous!”

“How enormous is it?” asked Tripitaka.

“I can’t see the end of it,” replied Pilgrim. “It seems to be at least a thousand miles long.”

Horrified, Tripitaka said, “What’ll we do?”

“Please don’t worry, Master,” said Sand-monk with a laugh. “Let’s follow the example of those who burn off the land and set fire to the brambles so that you may pass through.”

“Stop babbling!” said 8 Rules. “To burn off the land, you must do it around the time of the tenth month when the vegetation has dried up and is readily ignitable. Right now it is growing luxuriantly. How could it be burned?”

“Even if you’d,” added Pilgrim, “the flame would be quite terrifying.”

“How are we to get across then?” asked Tripitaka. “If you want to get across,” said 8 Rules with a laugh, “you’ll have to do as I say!”

Dear Idiot! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and gave his torso a stretch, crying, “Grow!” At once he reached the height of some two hundred feet. Shaking his muckrake, he cried, “Change!” and the handle of the rake attained the length of some three hundred feet. In big strides, he walked forward and, his two hands wielding the rake, pushed away the brambles left and right. “Let Master follow me!” he said, and a highly pleased Tripitaka quickly urged his horse forward, followed by Sand-monk poling the luggage and Pilgrim, also using his iron rod to clear up the path. That whole day they did not rest at all and journeyed for some one hundred miles. By evening they arrived at a small clearing where they came upon a stone monument. On top were inscribed in large letters the words, Bramble Ridge. Down below there was a row of smaller characters that read:

*800 miles of brambles intertwined, a road that few since days of old have trod.*

When 8 Rules saw the monument, he said, laughing, “Let Old bull add one more lines to the inscription:

*But now 8 Rules’ able to clear a path straight to the West that’s level and broad.”*

Delighted, Tripitaka dismounted and said, “Oh, disciple! We’ve tired you out! Let’s spend the night here, and we’ll journey again when it’s light tomorrow.”

“Don’t stop now, Master,” said 8 Rules. “While the sky is still fair and we’re inspired, we’d clear the path right through the night and get on with it!”

The elder had to comply. 8 Rules went forward and again made a great effort; with the rider not resting his hands and the horse not stopping its trotting, master and disciples journeyed for one whole night and another day. Once more it was getting late but what lay before them was a bosky sight. They also heard the poem of wind-whipped bamboos and the sound of rustling pines as they came upon another stretch of clearing, in the centre of which was an old shrine. There, outside the door, were pines and cedars arrested in green, peaches and plums vying to display their beauty. After he dismounted, Tripitaka and his three disciples looked around. What they saw was an old shrine atop a cool stream before the cliff and desolate grounds, mist-wrapped, met 1’s eye. For clumps of sala trees long years had passed; a mossed-terrace stood there as seasons went by. Like swaying jade the bamboos seemed to speak and grief was told by a bird’s fading cry. Scant traces of man, or of beast and fowl; just wild blooms and creepers on walls most high. After he had surveyed the region, Pilgrim said, “This place portends more evil than good. We’d not stay here long.”

“Elder Brother, aren’t you overly suspicious?” asked Sand-monk. “There’s not even a trace of humans here, let alone of a weird beast or a fiendish bird. What’s there to be afraid of?” He had hardly finished speaking when a gust of cold wind brought out from behind the shrine door an old man. He had on his head a square turban, a simple robe on his body, a cane in his hand, and a pair of straw sandals on his feet. He was followed by a demon attendant who had a red beard and a scarlet body, a green face with jutting tusks, and who had on his head a platter of wheat cakes. Going to his knees, the old man said, “Great Sage, this humble deity is the local spirit of the Bramble Ridge. Having learned of your arrival, I’ve little to offer you except this platter of specially prepared steamed cakes. I present this to all of you venerable masters and ask you to have a meal. Throughout this region of eight hundred miles, there is no human household. So, please take some cakes for the relief of your hunger.”

Delighted, 8 Rules walked forward with outstretched hands and was about to take one of the cakes. Pilgrim however who had had the old man under scrutiny for some time shouted immediately, “Stop! This isn’t a good fellow! Don’t you dare be impudent! What sort of a local spirit are you that you dare come to deceive old monkey? Watch my rod!”

When the old man saw him attacking, he spun around and at once changed into a gust of cold wind. With a loud whoosh, it swept the elder high into the air. Tumbling over and over, he soon vanished from sight. The Great Sage was so taken aback that he did not know how to begin to search for his master while 8 Rules and Sand-monk stared at each other, paling with consternation. Even the white horse neighed in fear. The four of them, three brothers and the horse, seemed to be in a trance; they looked far and near but there was not a trace of their master. They were busily searching there. That old man and his demon attendant hauled the elder before a mist-shrouded stone house and then lowered him gently. Taking the hand of the elder, the old man said, “Holy monk, please don’t be afraid. We’re not bad people. I’m actually the Squire Eighteen<sup>1</sup> of Bramble Ridge. Since ours happens to be a night of clear breeze and bright moonlight, I’ve brought you here especially to meet a few friends and to talk about poetry just to spend a pleasant moment of leisure.” Only then did the elder manage to collect himself. As he glanced about carefully, this was truly what he found: a haunt of misty clouds obscure, a house in scenes divinely pure, good for keeping the self-pure in training for flower and bamboo planting. Cranes on verdant cliffs will be seen; frogs croak from ponds lovely and green. Mount-Tai’s magic hearth it surpasses brighter than Flower Mount’s air masses. Fishing and ploughing need we mention? Worthy is this place of reclusion. Sit still and your thoughts turn serene as faint moonlight ascends the screen. As Tripitaka enjoyed the scenery, he felt that the moon and the stars grew even brighter.

Then he heard voices, all saying, “Squire Eighteen’s succeeded in inviting the holy monk here.”

When the elder raised his head, he saw three old men: the 1<sup>st</sup> bore frostlike features, the 2<sup>nd</sup> had flowing green hair and beard, and the third was meek-mannered and dark coloured. They each had different looks and different garments, and they all came to salute Tripitaka. Returning their salutes, the elder said, “What merit or virtue does this disciple possess that he’d win such kind attention from these aged mortals?”

“We’ve always heard,” replied Squire Eighteen with a smile, “that the holy monk is possessed of the Way. Having waited for you for a long time, we’re fortunate indeed to be able to meet you now. If you’re willing to share with us the pearl and jade of your wisdom, we beg you to sit and chat with us, as we long to know the true teachings, the mysteries of Chan.”

Again bending low, Tripitaka said, “May I ask the honourable styles of the aged mortals?”

“The one with the frostlike features,” replied Squire Eighteen, “is called Squire Lonesome Rectitude. The green-haired one has the name of Master Void-Surmounting, and the humble one goes by the title of Cloud-Brushing Dean. This old moron bears the name of Knotty Virtue.”

“And what is the honourable age of the mortals?” asked Tripitaka.

Squire Lonesome Rectitude said, “My age’s a millennium attained: dense leaves, ever young, reach toward the sky. Thick, fragrant boughs shaped like dragons and snakes; a frame of luscious shade frost and snow did try. Hardy since childhood and not worn by time, ever upright, I on magic arts rely. The phoenix, no common bird, finds shelter here – lush and lofty, from this world’s dust raised high.”

Smiling, Master of Void-Surmounting said, “A millennium old, I’ve braved wind and frost with tall, spiritual stems by nature strong. My sounds hum like rain in a quiet night; my shade spreads cloudlike all autumn day long. My roots are coiled for endless life I’ve known; I’ve been taught of eternal youth the poem. My guests are cranes and dragons, no worldly life. Vibrantly green with gods I dwell along.”

Smiling, Cloud-Brushing Dean said, “A thousand cold winters I, too, have passed: old but cheerful, my form’s both pure and quaint. Aloof, I shun mixing with worldly dust and noise, still romantic though by frost and snow un-taint. Seven Worthies<sup>2</sup> are my friends of the Way; six Hermits<sup>3</sup> would join me in verse to paint. Not ditties or jingles, we make noble rhymes. I’m by nature friend of long-life saints.”

Smiling, Knotty Virtue, Squire 18 said, “I, too, am over a millennium old. Still fair and true, I’m naturally green. My strength’s lovely, born of dew and rain; the world’s creative mystery I did glean. Only I thrive in all gorges’ mist and wind; in all four climes none’s more than I serene. I spread a hood of jade to shade my guests, discussing Dao or with lute and chess are seen.”

Thanking them, Tripitaka said, “All four of you mortals are enjoying long life. Why, Master Knotty Virtue’s more than a millennium old! Having attained the Way at such an advanced age, and blessed with such extraordinary and refined features, could you be the Four White-Haired Ones<sup>4</sup> of the Han?”

“You praise us far too much!” replied the 4 old men together. “We’re not the Four White-Haired Ones but only the Four Disciplined Ones deep in the mountain. May we ask in turn the holy monk for his age?”

With hands folded before his chest and saluting, Tripitaka replied: “I left mum’s womb forty years ago: <sup>5</sup>even before my fate on earth’s woe! Fleeing for life, I tossed on waves manifold; I cast my shell, meeting by luck Mount Gold. Myself I trained and Threads read with zeal; God’s true worship was my sole ideal. Now my King sends me to go to the West. Your divine presence thus favours my quest.” The four old men all joined in praising him, and one of them said, “From the moment he left his mum’s womb, the holy monk has followed the teachings of God. He has indeed practiced austerities from childhood, and thus he is in truth a superior monk who possesses the Way. Now that we’ve this good fortune of receiving your honourable presence, we make bold to seek from you your great doctrine. We beg you to instruct us on the rudiments of the law of Chan, and that would gratify our lifelong desire.”

When he heard these words, the elder was not in the least daunted. He began to speak to the 4 of them saying, “Chan’s quiescence and the Law’s salvation. But the salvation of quiescence won’t be accomplished without enlightenment. The cleansing of the mind and the purgation of desires, the abandonment of the worldly and departure from the dust – that’s enlightenment. Now it’s a rare opportunity to attain a human body, be born in Middle Land, <sup>6</sup>and encounter the correct doctrine of God. There’s no greater blessing than the possession of these three things. The wondrous ways of ultimate virtue, vast and boundless, can neither be seen nor heard. It can however, extinguish the six organs of sense and the six kinds of perception. Thus, perfect wisdom’s neither birth nor death, neither want nor excess; it encompasses both form, emptiness, and it reveals the unreality of both saints and commoners. To contact the truth, you must know the mallet and tong of Primal Origin; <sup>7</sup> to intuit the Real, you must realise the technique of God. Exercise the power of mindlessness; <sup>8</sup>read and shatter Extinguishment. By means of the awakening of awakening, you must comprehend the enlightenment of enlightenment. One spark of spirit light would protect all. Let the fierce flame shine like an exerciser’s robe, sweeping the religion realm as one thing seen. Pierce the dark and tenuous; fortify also the strong. This mysterious pass, thus mentioned who can go through? Mine’s the originally practiced Chan of great awakening, retained and known just by those of affinity and will.”

The 4 elders showed boundless delight when they received this instruction. With hands folded and saluting in submission, all of them said, “The holy monk’s indeed the very source of enlightenment in the principle of Chan!”

Then Cloud-Brushing Dean said, “Though Chan is quiescence and the Law, salvation, it is still required of us to be firm in our nature and sincere in our mind. Even if we became the true mortal of great awakening, it is, in the end, the way of no birth.<sup>9</sup> The mystery we live by is greatly different from yours.”

“The Way is indeed extraordinary,” said Tripitaka, “but while substance and function are one, how could there be any difference?”

Smiling, Cloud-Brushing Dean said, “Since we’re born hardy and strong, our substance and function differ from yours. Indebted to Heaven and Earth for giving us a body, we’re beholden to rain and dew for our colours’ nourishment. Smiling, we disdain the wind and frost and pass the days and months. Not one leaf of ours would wither; all our branches hold firm to virtue. Our words are unlike yours which, instead of consulting the Liezi, cling to those of Sanskrit. Now, the Dao<sup>10</sup> was originally established in China. Instead, you seek its illumination in the West. You’re squandering your straw sandals! I wonder what it’s that you’re after. A stone lion must have gouged out your heart! Your bones must have been pumped full of wild foxes’ saliva! You forget your origin to practice Chan, vainly seeking a god’s fruit. Yours are like the prickly riddles of my Bramble Ridge, like its tangled enigmas. This sort of superior man, how could he teach and lead? With this kind of model, how could he transmit truth’s imprint? You must examine the appearances before you for there’s life by itself in quiescence. The bottomless bamboo basket will draw water; the rootless iron tree will bring forth flowers. Plant your feet firmly on the Lingbao summit; Maitreya’s fine congress you’ll attend back home.”

When Tripitaka heard these words, he respected to thank the speaker but he was raised by Squire 18. As Squire Lonesome Rectitude also came forward to pull him up, Master Void-Surmounting let out a loud guffaw and said, “The words of Cloud-Brushing are obviously shot full of holes. Please rise, holy monk, and don’t believe all he says. In this moonlight we never intended at all to discuss theories of self-cultivation. Let’s indulge rather in the composing and reciting of poetry.”

“If you want to do that,” said Cloud-Brushing with a smile, “Let’s go inside our little shrine for a cup of tea. How about it?”

The elder leaned forward to stare at the stone house that had on top of its entrance an inscription of four words written in large characters: Shrine of Sylva mortals. They walked together inside and took their proper seats. Then the scarlet-bodied demon attendant came to serve them with a platter of China Root pudding and five goblets of fragrant liquid. The four old men invited the Tang Monk to eat first but he was so suspicious that he dared not take it right away. Only after the four old men partook of the food did Tripitaka also eat 2 pieces of the pudding. Each of them then drained the fragrant liquid and the goblets were taken away. As he glanced cautiously around, Tripitaka saw that it was so bright and luminous inside the shrine that they seemed to be sitting directly beneath the moon. From rock edges water flowed out and from flowers came forth fragrance. Unsoiled by half a speck of dust, this place of grace and elegance. Gladdened and comforted by such heavenly scenery, the elder could not refrain from reciting the following line: “The mind of Chan seems like the dustless moon.”

With a broad grin, the elder Knotty Virtue immediately followed the lead and recited: *“On us our muse shines as the cloudless noon.* Squire Lonesome Rectitude said, *“Fine phrases are cut like rolled-out brocade.”*

Master Void-Surmounting said, *“Like rare gems good lines are fashioned and made.”*

Cloud-Brushing Dean said, *“Six Periods<sup>11</sup> are purged of their vain conceits; the Book of Odes a new compiler meets.”* <sup>12</sup>

“This disciple’s,” said Tripitaka, “in an unguarded moment blurted out a few words. It’s like wielding the axe before the Carpenter God! When I heard just now the fresh and elegant lines of you mortals, I knew I’d met poetic masters.”

The elder Knotty Virtue said, “No need for idle chatter, holy monk. Those who’ve left the family must finish the work they started. If you begin a poem, you can’t avoid finishing it, can you? We hope you’ll complete it.”

“This disciple can hardly do that,” replied Tripitaka. “May I trouble Squire Eighteen to find the concluding lines and render the poem whole? That’ll be wonderful!”

“How cruel you’re!” said Knotty Virtue. “You’d the first line, after all. How could you refuse the last two? To withhold your talents is hardly reasonable.”

Tripitaka had no choice but to finish the last line by reciting: *“Ere the tea darkens as pine breezes recite, this happy mood of poems fills my heart with spring.”*

“Bravo!” said Squire 18. “What a magnificent line – *this happy mood of poems fills my heart with spring!*”

“Knotty Virtue,” said Squire Lonesome Rectitude, “since you’re verily addicted to poetry, you love to mull over every line. Why not start another poem?”

Without hesitation, Squire 18 said, “I’ll begin in the manner of *Pushing the Needle*: <sup>13</sup>*spring quickens me not, nor does winter dry; for me they are nothing, though clouds float by.”*

Master Void-Surmounting said, “I’ll follow you in that manner also. *By me, though windless, is formed a dancing shade. One loves such blessing and long life displayed.”*

Then Cloud-Brushing Dean said, *“Displayed like West Mountain’s noble sire, I’m pure as southland’s empty-hearted squire.”*

Finally, Squire Lonesome Rectitude said, *“Squired by slanting growth of highest grade, I yield the crossbeams of the king’s estrade.”*<sup>14</sup>

On hearing this, the elder was full of praise for them, saying, “This is truly the most sublime poetry, its nobility reaches up to Heaven! Though this disciple’s without talents, he’d make bold to begin another two lines.”

“Holy monk,” said Squire Lonesome Rectitude, “you’re someone accomplished in the Way, someone who’s received profound nurture. There’s no need for you to do another linking verse. Please grant us an entire poem by yourself and we’ll make the utmost effort to reply in kind.”<sup>15</sup> Tripitaka had no alternative but to compose, smiling, a poem in the style of the regulated verse:

*A priest goes West to seek the religion king: to farthest shores some wondrous scripts he’d bring.*

*“Thrice-blooming plants the poet’s luck augment; jewel-tree blossoms waft a god scent.”*<sup>16</sup>

*To reach beyond the highest heights he’ll strive and try in all the worlds his office to live.*

*When he the noble jade form captivates, the field of rites lies before Extinguishment’s gates.*

When the 4 old men heard this, they paid him the highest compliments. Then Squire 18 said, “This old moron’s no other abilities except audacity. I’ll force myself to answer your poem with this one of mine:

*Knotty Virtue’s aloof, I scorn the sylvan king. My fame spreads wider than this long-lived thing!*<sup>17</sup>

*Tall, serpentine shade over the mount’s bent; the stream drinks my millennial, amber scent.*

*I reach out to enhance the universe though wind and rain will my act and aim reverse.*

*Declining I lack those mortal bones with naught but fungi as my own gravestones.”*

“This poem,” said Squire Lonesome Rectitude, “begins with a heroic line and the middle parallel couplets show tremendous strength, too. But the concluding lines are far too modest. How admirable! How admirable! This old moron will also reply with this poem:

*My frosty face often pleases the avian kings. My talents thrive by the Hall of Four Great Things.*<sup>18</sup>

*Pearl drops of dew adorn my jade-green tent; a gentle breeze will spread my chilly scent.*

*My murmurs at night the long porches attend; an old shrine in autumn my shadows befriend.*

*To spring I give birthday gifts on new year’s day; I’m the old master of the mountain way.”*

“Marvellous poem! Marvellous poem!” said Master Void-Surmounting, laughing. “Truly it’s as if the moon is putting the centre of Heaven under duress. How could this old moron reply in kind? But I suppose I’d not allow this opportunity to pass by and so, I’ll have to throw together a few lines:

*Of towering talents close to lords and king, my fame by Grand Pure Palace<sup>19</sup> once did spring.*

*On kiosks are seen green ether’s descent; by darkened walls passes my faint, crisp scent.*

*Upright forever I retain my mirth for these roots are formed deep within the earth.*

*Above the clouds my dancing shadow soars beyond those vainglorious, floral corps.”*

“The poems of the three squires,” said Cloud-Brushing Dean, “are most noble and elegant; they show the finest purity and simplicity. Truly they can be said to have come from a brocaded pouch. My body’s little strength and bowels have little talents but the instruction I received from the three squires has opened up my mind. So I’ll offer this doggerel, too. Please don’t laugh at me!

*In Qi-Yu<sup>20</sup> gardens I delight a sage king. Through fields of Wei<sup>21</sup> I’m free to sway and swing.*

*No Naïad’s tears my jade-like skin had stained but mottled sheaths had Han histories contained.* <sup>22</sup>

*By frost my leaves their true beauty reveal. Could mist henceforth my stems’ lustre conceal?*

*With Ziyou’s<sup>23</sup> passing my true friends are few though scholars’ praise my fame ever renews.”*<sup>24</sup>

“The poems of the various mortal elders,” said Tripitaka, “truly resemble pearls emitted by phoenixes. Not even Ziyou and Zixia, those two disciples of Confucius could surpass you. Moreover, I’m extremely grateful for your kindness and hospitality. It is however, deep in the night, and I fear that my three humble disciples are waiting for me somewhere. Your student, therefore, cannot remain here long. By your boundless love, let me leave now and go find them. I beg you to point out to me the way back.”

“Please don’t worry, holy monk,” said the four old men, laughing. “Ours is an opportunity that comes but once in a millennium. Though the night is deep, the sky is fair and the moon is very bright. Please sit here for a while longer. By morning we’ll escort you across the ridge, and you’ll without fail meet up with your disciples.”

As they were thus speaking, there walked in from outside the stone house two blue-robed maidens, holding a pair of red-gauze lanterns and followed by a mortal girl. She was twirling in her hand a sprig of apricot blossoms, and smiling broadly, she walked in to greet them. She had a *young face kingfisher adorned and colours better than rouge; luminous star-like eyes; moth brows neat and refined. Down below: a light pink skirt patterned with 5-coloured plums; up above; a maroon blouse without collar or sleeves. Small slippers pointed like phoenix beaks and slender stockings of silk brocade. Seductive and coy like a Mount-Tai goddess, she seems to be the fair Daji* <sup>25</sup> of old. “To what do we owe this visit, Apricot Mortal?” asked the 4 old men as they rose to greet her.

After the girl had saluted to all of them, she said, “I learned that a charming guest’s being entertained here and I’ve come especially to make his acquaintance. May I meet him?”

“The charming guest’s right here,” said Squire 18 pointing at the Tang Monk. “There’s no need for you to ask to see him.”

Bending low, Tripitaka dared not utter a word. “Bring us some tea, quickly!” cried the girl.

2 more yellow-robed maidens walked in with a red-lacquered tray on which there were six small porcelain tea cups, several kinds of exotic fruits, and a spoon for stirring placed in the middle. One of the maidens also carried a tea pot of white iron set in yellow copper, from which arose the overpowering aroma of fine tea. After tea had been poured, the girl revealed ever so slightly her slender fingers and presented a cup of it to Tripitaka first. Then she gave the drink to the four old men before taking one herself. “Why doesn’t the Apricot Mortal take a seat?” asked Master Void-Surmounting. Only then did she take a seat. When they finished their tea, the girl saluted again and said, “You mortals are revelling in great pleasures this evening. May I be instructed a little by your excellent verses?”

“Ours are all crude and vulgar utterances,” said Cloud-Brushing Dean, “but the compositions of the Holy Monk can truly be considered a product of the high Tang. They’re most admirable.”

“If it’s not too great an imposition,” said the girl, “I’d like to hear them.”

Whereupon the 4 old men gave a thorough rehearsal of the elder’s poems and his discourse on Chan. Smiling broadly, the girl said to them, “I’m so untalented and I’d really not air my incompetence but since I’ve had the privilege of hearing such magnificent poetry, I’d not allow myself to go uninspired. I’ll exert myself to the utmost to respond in kind to the second poem of the holy monk with a regulated verse of my own. How about that?”

She thus recited loudly: *‘My fame’s made lasting by Han-Wu King; <sup>26</sup>to me his pupils did Confucius bring. <sup>27</sup>Dong Xian’s<sup>28</sup> affection would my growth foment; Sun Chu<sup>29</sup> once loved my Feast-of-Cold-Food scent. How tender and coy is this rain-moistened bloom! What fresh verdant hues half veiled in misty gloom! Ripeness makes me a little tart, I know. Banished each year to wheat fields, that’s my woe.”*

When those 4 men heard this poem, they all congratulated her saying, “It’s most elegant and sublime! And the lines are so full of vernal longings. Such a marvellous line – *‘How tender and coy is this rain-moistened bloom!’*”

Smiling in a coquettish manner, the girl said, “I’m in fear and trepidation! The composition of the holy monk just now was something that could be said to have come from a mind of silk and a mouth of brocade. Let me say to him: if you can be persuaded to show us your talent, how about granting me another of your poems?” The Tang Monk however, dared not reply. As the girl gradually became amorous, she began to sidle closer to where he was seated. “What’s the matter with you, charming guest?” she asked softly. “If you don’t have some fun on such a beautiful night, what else are you waiting for? The span of a life time, how long could that be?”

“If the Apricot Mortal,” said Squire Eighteen, “entertained such genial feelings, how could the holy monk not reciprocate by giving his consent? If he withholds his favours, then he doesn’t know how lucky he is.”

“But the holy monk,” said Squire Lonesome Rectitude, “is a gentleman of fame and accomplishment in the Way who certainly will not indulge in anything improper. If we insist on such activities, it is we who are guilty of impropriety: we’d be soiling a man’s fame and spoiling his virtue. That’s hardly the proper thing to do! If Apricot Mortal is indeed so inclined, let Cloud-Brushing Dean and Squire Eighteen serve as go-betweens. Master Void-Surmounting and I can be the witnesses. They can then seal this marital contract. Wouldn’t that be nice?”

On hearing this, Tripitaka turned red in anger. Leaping up all at once, he shouted, “You’re all fiendish creatures! How you’ve tried to tempt me! At first, I allowed your platitudes to goad me into discussing the mysteries of Dao, and that was still all right. But how could you use this ‘beauty trap’ now to try to seduce me? What have you to say to this?” When the four elders saw how enraged Tripitaka had become, they became so startled that every one of them bit his fingers and fell completely silent. The scarlet-bodied demon attendant however, grew very angry and bellowed, “Monk, you can’t even tell when someone’s trying to do you a favour! Is there anything bad about this dear sis of mine? Look at her refinement and talents, her lovely jade-like features. Let’s not talk about her skills in the feminine arts. Just a single poem of hers has already demonstrated that she is a worthy match for you. Why do you so brusquely refuse her? You’d better not let this opportunity slip by. What Squire Lonesome Rectitude says is most appropriate. If you refuse to do anything improper, let me serve as your marriage official.”

Tripitaka turned pale with fright but he refused to give his assent no matter how urgently they pleaded with him. “You foolish priest!” said the demon attendant again. “We speak to you in a kindly manner, and you refuse us. If you arouse our wild and unruly passions and make us abduct you to another region where you neither can pursue your priestly life nor take a wife, won’t you’ve lived in vain?” With a mind like metal or stone, that elder adamantly refused to comply. He thought to himself, “I wonder where my disciples are looking for me...” So speaking to himself, he could not restrain the tears from rolling down his cheeks. Trying to placate him with a smile, the girl sat down close to him and took out from her sleeve a honey-scented handkerchief to wipe away his tears. “Charming guest,” she said, “don’t be so upset! Let’s you and I nestle in jade and perfume and have some fun!” Uttering a loud cry, the elder bounded up and tried to dash out of the door, only to be grabbed by all those people. They brawled and struggled like that until dawn.

Suddenly another cry could be heard: “Master, Master where are you speaking?” The Great Pilgrim Sun together with 8 Rules and Sand-monk, had been leading the horse and poling the luggage for a whole night without stopping. Going through brambles and thorns, searching this way and that, they managed to cover the entire eight hundred miles of the Bramble Ridge halfway between cloud and fog. By morning they reached the western edge of the ridge, and that was when they came upon the noises made by the Tang Monk. They responded with the cry, and the elder somehow managed to struggle out of the door, yelling, “Wukong, I’m here! Come and save me, quick!” In a flash, those four old men, the demon attendant, the girl, and her maidens all disappeared.

Soon 8 Rules and Sand-monk arrived, saying, “Master, how did you get here?” Tugging at Pilgrim, Tripitaka said, “Oh, disciples! I’ve been a great burden on you. That old man we saw last night who claimed to be the local spirit coming to offer us food, was the person who hauled me to this place when with a shout you’re about to hit him. He led me inside the door by the hand and introduced me to three other old men, all addressing me as the holy monk. Every one of them was quite refined in speech and manner, and they were all able poets. We spent our time in the exchange of verses until



about midnight, when a beautiful girl accompanied by lanterns also arrived to meet me. She, too, composed a poem and addressed me as the charming guest. Then because of my looks she wanted to marry me. I woke up to their scheme all at once and refused. They began to put pressure on me, one wanting to be the go-between, another the marriage official, and still another the witness. I swore I'd not comply, arguing with them and desperately trying to struggle free. Out of the blue you people arrived. I suppose partly because it was getting light already, and partly because they seemed to be afraid of you, they all vanished suddenly, though they were still pulling and tugging at me just a moment ago."

"If you talked and discussed poetry with them," said Pilgrim, "did you not ask them for their names?"

"I did ask them for their styles," replied Tripitaka. "The first old man called himself Squire Eighteen, and his style was Knotty Virtue. The second was styled Squire Lonesome Rectitude; the third, Master Void-Surmounting; and the fourth, Cloud-Brushing Dean. They addressed the girl as Apricot Mortal."

"Where are these creatures located?" asked 8 Rules. "Where did they go?" Tripitaka said, "I don't know where they went but the place where we discussed poetry was not far from here."

As the three disciples looked around with their master, they discovered a cliff nearby, and on the cliff was a plaque bearing the words, Shrine of Sylva mortals. "It was right here," said Tripitaka. When Pilgrim examined the place more carefully, he saw nearby a huge juniper tree, an old cypress tree, an old pine tree, and an old bamboo. Behind the bamboo was a scarlet maple tree. As he looked toward the far side of the cliff, he saw also an old apricot tree, flanked by two stalks of winter plum and two cassia plants.

"Have you people found the fiends?" said Pilgrim with a laugh. "Not yet," replied 8 Rules. "Don't you know," said Pilgrim, "it is these several trees right here that have become spirits?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "how do you know that?"

"Squire Eighteen," replied Pilgrim, "is the pine; Squire Lonesome Rectitude is the cypress; Master Void-Surmounting is the juniper; Cloud-Brushing Dean is the bamboo; the scarlet-bodied demon is the maple; Apricot Mortal is, of course, the apricot tree while the maids are the cassia and the winter plum." When 8 Rules heard this, he rushed forward without further ado: using his rake along with several shoves of his horn, he brought to the ground those winter plum, cassia, old apricot, and maple. From beneath the roots of these trees, fresh blood indeed spurted out. Tripitaka walked forward to pull at him, saying, "Aware of Ability, don't hurt them. Though they have reached the stage of becoming spirits, they have done me no harm. Let's find our way and leave."

"Master, you'd not pity them," said Pilgrim. "For I fear that they may become great fiends later and then they'll bring much harm to humans." Idiot thus decided to work his rake some more and toppled the pine, cypress, juniper, and bamboo as well. Only after that did they help their master to mount up and all proceeded along the main road to the West once more.

**081**  
**Fiends set up falsely the Small Thunderclap; the 4 pilgrims all meet a great ordeal**  
*This chapter's karmic import's to persuade man to do good and shun all evil works.*  
*Even a single thought's known to all the gods, do whatever you'll.*  
*Folly or cleverness, how'd you learn?*  
*No-mind's still the cure for both of these.*  
*While yet alive, the Way you'd cultivate; don't drift or roam.*  
*Recognise your source and cast your shell.*  
*To seek long life, you must catch it.*  
*Be ever enlightened; let ghee anoint you.*  
*Pump through 3 Passes<sup>2</sup> to fill the dark sea will make the virtuous ride the phoenix and crane.*  
*Then compassion will with mercy unite as you reach ecstasy.*

Tripitaka was most single-minded in his piety and sincerity. He was protected by the gods above; even such spirits as those of grass and wood also came to keep him company. After 1 night of elegant conversation on the arts, he was delivered from the thorns and thistles, no longer encumbered by vines or creepers. As he and his 3 disciples journeyed westward, they travelled for a long time and it was again the end of winter. This was in truth a day of spring: *all things thrive and flourish for the Dipper's handle returns to yin.* <sup>3</sup>*Young grasses cover the earth with green and verdant willows line the banks. A ridge of peach blossoms red like brocade; half a stream of silky water like green jade. How rain and wind persist to one's endless feelings! The sun enhances the flowers' grace; the swallows fetch light mossy buds. Like Wang Wei painting's*<sup>4</sup> *the mountain's dark and light; birds chatter with the sharp tongue of Jizi.* <sup>5</sup>*No one's here to joy in such fancy fineries save dancing butterflies and reciting bees.* Master and his disciples proceeded with the slow trotting of the horse, enjoying themselves all the while by searching out the fragrant flowers and treading on the green meadows. As they walked along, they came upon a tall mountain which seemed to touch the sky from a distance. "Wukong," said Tripitaka pointing with his whip, "I wonder how tall that mountain's. It seems that it's actually touching the blue sky or it may have even punctured the azure heavens!"

Pilgrim said, "I remember a line of an ancient poem that say: *only the sky remains high above; no mountain can equal its height.* This line's trying to describe the extreme height of one particular mountain such that no other mountain could be compared with it. But how'd a mountain actually touch the sky?"

"If it didn't," said 8 Rules, "then why did people call Mount Kunlun *the pillar of Heaven*?"

Pilgrim replied, "Don't you know the old adage, *Heaven was not filled in the northwest.* Now Mount Kunlun is located in the northwest, at the position of *qian*, and that's why it is commonly thought to be a mountain that can hold up the sky by filling the void. Hence the name, Pillar of Heaven."

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, laughing, "don't give him all these nice explanations! When he hears them, he'll try to outsmart someone else. Let's get moving. When we've climbed the mountain, then we'll know how tall it's."

Idiot tried to lunge at Sand-monk to smack him, and as the 2 of them tangled while proceeding, the old master urged the horse into a gallop. In a moment, they drew near to the mountain cliff. As they ascended the mountain step by step what they saw was a *forest where the wind was howling, a brook where the water was gurgling. No crow or bird flew over this mountain; even mortals might say, 'It's hard!'*

*10000 cliffs and ravines, 1000000 twists and turns. No man reaching this place of churning dust; no end the sight of strange, ghostly rocks. Clouds at some spots seemed like shimmering pools; trees everywhere filled with birds' raucous calls. Deer left, holding agaric; apes returned, bearing peaches. Foxes and badgers jumped about the ledge; antelopes played on the mountain peak. A sudden roar of the tiger made one cringe as striped leopards and grey wolves barred the road.* The moment that Tripitaka caught sight of this, he was terrified but Pilgrim Sun displayed his vast magic powers. *Look at him with his golden-hooped rod!* He gave one shout and all those wolves, tigers, and leopards scattered. Opening up a path, he led his master straight up the tall mountain. After they passed the summit, they descended westward until they reached a plateau where they suddenly came upon rays of divine light and strands of coloured mists. There was in the distance a magnificent building, from which the faint, harmonious sounds of bells and sonorous stones could be heard. "Disciples," said Triptitaka, "take a look and see what kind of place that's."

Shading his eyes with his hand, Pilgrim lifted his head to stare at the building. *It's a good place indeed! Truly a bejewelled edifice, a noble monastery. An empty valley that augments the poems of earth; a quiet place that diffuses nature's fragrance, verdant pines, rain-soaked, shroud the tall towers; green bamboos, cloud-wrapped, guard the lecture hall. Lights radiate from this distinctive dragon palace; colours flutter around this Religious domain. Scarlet rails and jade portals; painted pillars and carved beams. Threads explained, incense fills the seats. Mysteries exposed, the moon lights up the screens. Birds recite within the scarlet trees; cranes drink at the pebbled brook. Flowers bloom everywhere in this Jetavana Park; on 3 sides Śrāvastī light spills through open doors. Doors of rugged buildings face the mountain range. Hollow bells and stones strike languidly and long. The opened windows in a gentle breeze, the rolled up screen in curls of smoke. With monks here the life's ascetic, a peace not marred by things profane. Truly a place divine which the world can't touch: a quiet monastery, a good field of rites.* After Pilgrim had looked over the place, he turned to Tripitaka saying, "Master, that's a monastery over there. I don't know why however within the aura of Chan and the auspicious lights there seems to be an air of violence as well. When I look at this scenery, it reminds me greatly of Thunderclap but the road just does not seem right. When we reach the building, don't walk in immediately for I fear that some sinister hand may bring us harm."

"If this place reminds you of Thunderclap," said the Tang Monk, "could it be verily the Spirit Mountain? You'd better not slight my sincerity and delay the very purpose of my journey."

"No! No!" said Pilgrim. "I've travelled on the way to the Spirit Mountain several times before. How'd it be this one?"

"Even if it isn't," said 8 Rules, "there must be a good person staying here."

Sand-monk said, "We don't have to be so suspicious. This road's to take us right past that door. Whether it's Thunderclap or not, one look will tell us."

"What Awakened to Purity says," said Pilgrim, "is quite reasonable." Urging his horse with the whip, the elder soon arrived before the monastery gate, on top of which he saw the 3 words:

The Thunderclap Monastery

He was so astonished that he rolled off the horse and fell to the ground. "You wretched ape!" he scolded. "You've just about killed me! It's the Thunderclap Monastery and you still want to deceive me!" Attempting to placate him with a smile, Pilgrim said, "Don't get upset, Master. Take another look. There're four words on the gate of the monastery and you've only seen three of them. And you still blame me?" Trembling all over, the elder scrambled up and took another look. There were indeed these 4 words:

The Small Thunderclap Monastery

"If it's only The Small Thunderclap Monastery," said Tripitaka, "there must be a Religious patriarch inside. The *Threads* mentioned some three thousand Gods but I suppose they can't be all in one place. Guanyin's after all in South Sea, Auspicious-World's located at Mount Emei and The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness lives on the Mountain of Five Platforms. I wonder which Religious patriarch presides over this field of rites. The ancients said: *with Gods there're scriptures; without temples there're no treasures.* We'd go inside."

"You'd not," said Pilgrim. "This place portends more evil than good. If you run into calamity, don't blame me."

"Even if there's no God," said Tripitaka, "there must be his image. This disciple's made a vow that I'll bow to God whenever I encounter him. How'd I blame you?"

Whereupon he ordered 8 Rules to take out his cassock. After he changed into his clerical cap and tidied his clothing, Tripitaka strode forward. As they walked inside the monastery gate, they heard a loud voice saying, "Tang Monk, you came all the way from the Land of the East to seek an audience with our God. How dare you be so insolent now?" On hearing this, Tripitaka at once saluted himself; 8 Rules, too, respected as Sand-monk went to his knees. Only the Great Sage however, led the horse and remained behind, picking up the luggage. When they went inside the second door, they came upon the great hall of Siddhartha. Outside the great hall door and beneath the treasure throne stood in rows the five hundred Arhats, the three thousand guardians of the faith, the Four Great Diamond Kings, the mendicant nuns, the worshippers along with countless sage monks, and workers. Truly, there were also glamorous fragrant flowers and auspicious rays in abundance. The elder, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk were so overcome that they touched their heads to the ground with each step they took, inching their way toward the spirit platform. Only Pilgrim remained boldly erect. Then they heard another loud voice coming from the top of the lotus throne saying, "You, Sun Wukong! How daren't you salute before Siddhartha?"

Little did anyone expect that Pilgrim would look up and carefully scrutinise the one who spoke. When he recognised that it was a specious god, he at once abandoned the horse and the luggage. Gripping the rod in his hands, he shouted, "You bunch of accursed beasts! You're audacious! How dare you take in vain a god's name and soil the pure virtue of Siddhartha! Don't run away!" Wielding the rod with both his hands, he attacked at once. With a loud clang a pair of golden cymbals dropped from mid-air; falling on Pilgrim, they had him enclosed completely from head to foot. Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk were so aghast that they reached for their rake and staff but they were overwhelmed at once by those Arhats, guardians, sage monks, and workers who surged forward to surround the 3 pilgrims. Tripitaka, too, was thus caught, and all three of them were then firmly bound by ropes. The one who appeared as the Religious patriarch sitting on the lotus throne was actually a monster-king and those Arhats were all little fiends. After they put away their God appearances, they revealed again their fiendish forms and hauled the elder and his 2 disciples to the rear so that they could be locked up. Pilgrim was to remain sealed in the golden cymbals and never to be released. With the cymbals placed on the jewelled platform, he was expected to be reduced to pus and blood in the period of three days and nights. Thereafter the other pilgrims were to be steamed in an iron cage and eaten. Truly *green-eyed Monkey knew the false from the real. Chan Mind saluted low on gold form's appeal. Yellow Dame paid homage like a blind mule and Wood-Mum conversed like a fool, too. A fiend, growing strong, oppressed one's true self – the natural man duped by a wicked elf. Dao had little but the demon, big gain. A wrong turn to Side Door,* <sup>6</sup>*their work's vain!* At the time, the various fiends shut up the Tang Monk and his 2 disciples in the rear, and there they tied the horse also. After they placed his cassock and his clerical cap inside the luggage wrap, they hid these also in a guarded place. Now about that Pilgrim who had been enclosed within the golden cymbals. It was pitch black inside and he became so exasperated that he perspired all over. He tried pushing left and shoving right but he could not get out. Then he struck madly at the cymbals with his iron rod but he could not dent them even one whit. With no further alternative, he wanted to break the cymbals by sheer brute force. Making a magic sign with his fingers, he at once grew to thousands of feet tall but the cymbals also grew with him. There was not even the slightest crack to let in a ray of light. He made the magic sign again and at once his body diminished in size until he became as small as a mustard seed. The cymbals grew smaller, too with his body, so that there was not the tiniest hole. Gripping the iron rod, Pilgrim blew on it a divine breath, crying, "Change!" It changed into a flagpole that he used to hold up the cymbals. Then he selected two of his longer hairs behind his head and pulled them off, crying, "Change!" They changed immediately into a plum-flower-like, five-pointed drill; along the base of the rod, he drilled away for over a thousand times. There were loud scraping noises from the drill but he could not puncture the cymbals at all. In sheer desperation, Pilgrim made the magic sign again and recited the spell: "*Let Ohm and ram purify the religion realm. Key: Primary Reception Beneficial for Determination.*" <sup>7</sup>

He summoned the Guardian of 5 Quarters, the 6 Gods of Light and the 6 Gods of Darkness, and the 18 Guardians of Monasteries with this who gathered outside the golden cymbals saying, "Great Sage, we're all giving protection to your master so that the demons could not harm him. Why did you summon us?"

"That master of mine," said Pilgrim, "refused to listen to me! It's no big loss even if he were put to death! But what I want you to do is think of some way quickly to pry open these cymbals and let me out. Then we can take care of other matters. Right now, there's not a bit of light inside, and I'm so hot that I'm about to suffocate."

The various deities indeed tried to pry open the cymbals but they were so tightly closed up that they seemed to have grown together. The gods could not even budge them. "Great Sage," said the Golden-Headed Guardian, "we don't know what sort of treasure this pair of cymbals is but from top to bottom, they've become one whole piece now. Your humble deities are too weak to pry them loose."

"I don't know how much magic power I've used inside," said Pilgrim, "but I can't budge them either."

On hearing this, the Guardian told the Six Gods of Light to protect the Tang Monk and the Six Gods of Darkness to watch over the golden cymbals. As the various other Guardians of Monasteries took up positions of patrol front and back, he mounted the auspicious luminosity and, in a moment, went straight through the South Heaven Gate. Without waiting for further summons, he went up to the Hall of Divine Mists and saluted himself before the Jade Emperor. "My lord," he said, "your subject is the Guardian of Five Quarters. I commend to you the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who is accompanying the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures. Passing through a mountain, they came upon The Small Thunderclap Monastery. By mistake the Tang Monk thought it was the Spirit Mountain and he entered the monastery to worship. It was actually an edifice set up by a fiendish monster to ensnare the master and his disciples. At this moment, the Great Sage is imprisoned within a pair of golden cymbals, from which he cannot be extracted at all. He is about to die, and that's why I've come here especially to memorialise to you." The Jade Emperor at once gave this decree: "Let the Twenty-Eight Constellations go quickly to subdue the fiends and bring deliverance to the pilgrims."

Not daring to linger, the Constellations followed the Guardian to leave the Heaven gate and arrived inside the monastery. It was about the time of the second watch at night; those monster-spirits, both great and small, having been rewarded by the old fiend for capturing the Tang Monk, had all gone to sleep. Without disturbing them, the Constellations gathered outside the cymbals and reported: "Great Sage, we're the Twenty-Eight Constellations sent here by the Jade Emperor to rescue you."

Exceedingly pleased by what he heard, Pilgrim said immediately, "Use your weapons and break the thing. Old monkey will be out at once."

"We daren't do so," replied the stars. "This thing is of metallic substance. If we strike at it, there'll be noises and the demon will be awakened. Then it'll be hard for us to rescue you. Let us use our weapons instead and see if we can puncture it. Wherever you detect even the faintest speck of light, you'll be able to escape."

"Exactly," said Pilgrim. *Look at them!*

Wielding spears, swords, scimitars, and axes, they began to pry at the pair of cymbals and stab at them, hauling them back and forth. They did this until about the time of the third watch but the cymbals could not be loosened at all. The pair seemed to be like a wonton that had been forged together. Pilgrim inside was looking this way and that; he crawled over here and rolled to the other side but he could not detect even the faintest speck of light. "Oh, Great Sage," said Gullet the Gold Dragon, "please be more patient. As I see it, this treasure must be a compliant thing that knows transformation also. Try to feel with your hands inside along the edges where the cymbals come together. I'm going to use the tip of my horn and see if I can wedge it inside. Then you can use some kind of transformation and escape through the spot where it comes apart."

Pilgrim agreed and started to use his hands to feel along the edges. Meanwhile, this Constellation made his body smaller until his horn became like a pointed needle. At the top of the cymbals where they were joined, he tried to stick the horn through. Alas, he had to use every ounce of his strength before he managed to reach inside. Then he caused his body and his horn to take on the religion form, crying, "Grow! Grow! Grow!" The horn grew to the thickness of a rice bowl. The edge of the cymbals however, did not behave like any metallic object at all; instead, they seemed to have been made of skin and flesh that had the horn of Gullet the Gold Dragon in a vice-like grip. There was not the slightest crack anywhere around the horn. When Pilgrim felt the horn with his hands, he said, "It's no use! There's no crack above or below! I've no choice. You must bear a little pain and take me out." *Marvellous Great Sage!* He changed the golden-hooped rod into a steel drill and drilled a hole on the tip of the horn. Transforming his body into the size of a mustard seed, he stuck himself inside the hole and yelled, "Pull the horn out! Pull the horn out!"

Again the Constellation exerted who knows how much strength before he yanked it out and fell exhausted to the ground. As soon as Pilgrim crawled out from the hole he drilled in the tip of the Constellation's horn and changed back into his true form, he whipped out the iron rod and slammed it down with a crash on the cymbals. It was as if a copper mountain had been toppled, a gold mine blown open. *What a pity! An instrument belonging to a god's instantly reduced to a thousand fragments of gold!* The 28 Constellations were terrified and the Guardian of 5 Quarters' hair stood on end. All those various fiends, old and young were roused from their dreams and even the old monster-king was startled in his sleep. He scrambled up, and as he put on his clothes, he ordered a roll of drums to assemble the rest of the fiends and arm them. It was about dawn at this time when they rushed beneath the treasure throne. There they saw Pilgrim Sun and the various Constellations hovering over the pieces of the golden cymbals. Paling with fright, the monster-king gave this order: "Little ones! Shut the front door quickly and let no one out." On hearing this, Pilgrim led the star spirits to mount the clouds and rose into the air. After the monster-king had put away the gold fragments, he ordered his troops to line up in formation outside the monastery gate. Nursing his anger, the monster-king hurriedly put on his armour and picked up a short, pliant wolf-teeth club<sup>9</sup> to walk out of his camp crying, "Pilgrim Sun, a brave man shouldn't run away! Step forward quickly and fight three rounds with me!"

Unable to contain himself, Pilgrim led the star spirits to lower their clouds and to take a good look at that monster-spirit. They saw he had *dishevelled hair strapped down by a thin and flat gold band; glowering eyes topped by thick, bushy yellow brows; a gall-like nose with nostrils flaring; a 4-square mouth with sharp, pointed teeth. He wore a cuirass of chain mail. Tied with a sash spun with raw silk. His feet were shod in calfskin boots; hands held up a wolf-teeth club. His form was beastlike though he was no beast; with looks nonhuman, still he seemed like man.* Sticking out his iron rod, Pilgrim shouted, "What kind of fiendish creature are you that you dare play the Religious patriarch, occupy this mountain, and falsely set up the Small Thunderclap Monastery?"

"So the little monkey doesn't know my name!" replied the monster-king, "and that's why you've transgressed the territory of this divine mountain! This place is called the Little Western Heaven. By my self-cultivation I've attained the right fruit, and thus Heaven bestowed on me these treasure bowers and precious towers. My name is the Old God of Yellow Brows but the people of this region, ignorant of that, address me as the Great King Yellow Brows or Holy Dad Yellow Brows. I've known all the while that you're on your way to the West, and that you've some abilities. That's why I displayed my powers and set up the image to lure your master to enter. I want to make a wager with you. If you can withstand me, I'll spare you all, master and disciples, so that you, too, can perfect the right fruit. If you can't, I'll slay all of you and I'll go myself to see Siddhartha for the scriptures, so that I can attain the right fruit for China."

"Monster-spirit," said Pilgrim with a laugh, "no need to brag! If you want this wager, come up quickly and receive the rod!"

*Very amiably the monster-king met him with the wolf-teeth club and this was some battle! The club and rod are not the same. To speak of them, they have their own form and shape! 1 is a short and pliant Religious arm; 1 is a deep-sea treasure stiff and hard. Both can transform according to 1's wish; they join this time and each strives to be strong. The short, pliant wolf-teeth's jewel bedecked; the sturdy golden-hooped is dragon-like. They can turn thick or thin, how marvellous! They can grow long or short with perfect ease. Demon and ape together fight a hot, furious battle – that's not a lie! The ape tamed by faith Mind Monkey becomes; the fiend mocks Heaven in his image false. Raging and fuming, they both turn cruel; vicious and violent they both look the same. This one aims at the head and refuses to quit; that 1 stabs at the face with no let up. Spat-out clouds darken the sun; belched-out fog cover the mount. Rod and club swing back and forth as they join; for Tripitaka they slight life or death. Look at the two of them!* They closed in for more than 50 times but no decision could be reached. Before the gate of the monastery, those various monster-spirits began to shout their encouragements, beating their drums and gongs at the same time and waving their banners. On this side, the 28 Constellations, the Guardian of 5 Quarters, and the other sages immediately uttered a cry and each wielding his weapon, had the demon surrounded. The fiends before the monastery were so terrified that they could no longer beat the drums; trembling all over, they could hardly sound the gongs. The old fiendish demon however, was not in the least afraid. With 1 hand he used his wolf-teeth club to fence off all those weapons; with his other hand he untied from his waist a little wrap made of old white cloth. He flung the wrap skyward and with a loud whoosh, the Great Sage Sun, the 28 Constellations, and the Guardian of 5 Quarters were all wrapped up inside it. Retrieving the wrap, the monster swung it on his shoulder and turned to stride back to his camp while all those little fiends were elated by this sudden triumph. Asking his little ones to fetch him several dozen ropes, the old fiend told them to untie the wrap: as each of the prisoners was fished out, he was immediately bound. All of the deities were weak and numb, and even their skin seemed to be wrinkled and their appearance emaciated. After they were bound, they were hauled to the rear of the monastery and thrown to the ground. Then the monster-king ordered a large banquet for himself and his subjects, and they drank until dusk before scattering to retire. The Great Sage Sun was tied up along with the other deities. By about midnight there suddenly came to them the sound of someone weeping. When the Great Sage listened closely, he discovered that it was the voice of Tripitaka who wailed, "Oh, Wukong! I loathe myself for giving you heed, thus landing us all in such dire need! Now you're hurt in the cymbals of gold. I'm rope bound that person had been told? Most bitter fate caused what we four had met; merits, three thousand, have been all upset. What will grant us from this bondage reprieve that we may reach smoothly the West and leave?"

On hearing this, Pilgrim was moved to compassion, saying to himself, "Though that master refused to believe my words and landed in this calamity, he nonetheless does think of old monkey when he is in such straits. Since the night is quiet and the fiend is sleeping, I may as well make use of this unguarded moment and go free the rest of them."

Dear Great Sage! Using the Magic of Body-Vanishing, he caused his body to shrink and immediately became free of the ropes. He approached the Tang Monk and whispered, "Master!" Recognising his voice, the elder said, "How did you get here?"

Softly Pilgrim gave him a thorough account of what had happened, and the elder was exceedingly pleased. "Disciple," he said, "please rescue me quickly! Whatever happens hereafter I'll listen to you. I'll not ever overrule you again." Then Pilgrim raised his hands and freed his master, after which he untied 8 Rules, Sand-monk, the Twenty-Eight Constellations, and the Guardian of Five Quarters. Dragging the horse over, he told them to hurry out the door. Just as they stepped outside however, he remembered the luggage and wanted to go back inside to search for it.

"You really value things more than the person!" said Gullet the Gold Dragon. "Isn't it enough that you've saved your master? Why must you look anymore for luggage?"

"The person's important, of course," said Pilgrim, "but the cassock and the bowl are even more important. In our wrap are the imperial travel rescript, the brocaded cassock, and the alms-bowl of purple gold, all superior Religious treasures. How could we not want them?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you go look for them, and we'll wait for you by the road."

Look at those star spirits who had the Tang Monk surrounded! Using the Magic of Displacement, they called up a gust of wind and had themselves taken clear out of the high walls. After they reached the main road, they headed straight down the mountain slope until they arrived at a level region. There they waited. It was about the hour of the third watch that the Great Sage Sun walked slowly and stealthily inside. The doors at every level were tightly shut. When he climbed to the tallest tower to take a look, he found that even the windows and casements were completely closed. He wanted, of course, to go inside down below but afraid that windows or the shutters might make a noise, he dared not push at them. Making the magic sign with his fingers, therefore, he shook his body once and changed into a divine mouse, commonly called the bat. It looks like *a pointed head like a rat's, his eyes shine, too. With wings he comes out at dusk; sightless he sleeps in the day. He hides in hollow tiles to find mosquitoes for food. He loves most the bright, fair moon and knows when to fly and soar.* Through the space that was not sealed up between the rafters and the roof tiles, he crawled inside. Passing through several doors, he reached the very centre of the building where under the third-level casement he came upon something glowing. It was not the light of lamps or fireflies, neither the glow of twilight nor the blaze of lightning. Half leaping and flying, he went near there to have another look and found that it was the wrap of their luggage that was emitting the glow. That monster-spirit had stripped the Tang Monk of his cassock, and instead of folding it properly, he merely stuffed it inside the wrap again. The cassock was, after all, a Religious treasure which had on it compliant pearls, Mani pearls, red cornelian beads, purple coral, relics, and the night-luminescent pearls. That was why it glowed. Exceedingly pleased by this discovery, Pilgrim changed back into his own form and picked up the luggage. Without even bothering to check whether the ropes were properly attached to the pole or not, he threw the load on his shoulder and began to walk out. One end of the luggage unexpectedly slipped off the pole and fell with a thud to the floor. Alas! This was what had to happen! The old monster-spirit was sleeping on the floor immediately down below, and he was awakened by that loud thud. Jumping up, he screamed, "Someone's here! Someone's here!"

Those various fiends, old and young, all arose and lit torches and lamps. In a noisy throng, they rushed about to inspect the front and rear. One of them arrived to say, "The Tang Monk's escaped!"

Another came to report: "Pilgrim and the rest are gone, too!" The old fiend immediately gave this order: "Guard all the doors!" When he heard this, Pilgrim feared that he might fall into their net again. Abandoning his load of luggage, he mounted the cloud somersault and leaped clear of the building through a window.

The monster-spirit led a thorough search for the Tang Monk at the front and back of the monastery but they failed to turn up anyone. When he saw that it was almost light, he took his club and led his troops to give chase. Beneath the mountain slope, still shrouded by cloud and fog, were the Twenty-Eight Constellations, the Guardian of Five Quarters, and the other deities. "Where do you think you're going?" shouted the monster-king. "Here I'm!"

"Brothers!" cried Horn the Wood Dragon, "the fiendish creature's here!"

Whereupon Gullet the Gold Dragon, Woman the Earth Bat, Chamber the Sun Hare, Heart the Moon Fox, Tail the Fire Tiger, Winnower the Water Leopard, Dipper the Wood Unicorn, Ox the Gold bull, Base the Earth Badger, Barrens the Sun Rat, Roof the Moon Swallow, House the Fire bull, Wall the Water Porcupine, Straddler the Wood Wolf, Harvester the Gold Hound, Stomach the Earth bull, Mane the Sun Rooster, Net the Moon Crow, Beak the Fire Monkey, Triaster the Water Ape, Well the Wood Hound, Ghost the Gold Ram, Willow the Earth Antelope, Star the Sun Horse, Spread the Moon Deer, Wing the Fire Serpent, and Axel-tree the Water Earthworm led the Golden-Headed Guardian, the Silver-Headed Guardian, the Six Gods of Light and Darkness, the Guardians of Monasteries,

8 Rules, and Sand-monk to meet their pursuers. Abandoning the Tripitaka Tang and forsaking the white dragon horse, they rushed into battle, each with weapon in hand. When this monster-king saw them, he laughed scornfully and gave a loud whistle. Immediately some four or five thousand monster-spirits, old and young, surged forward, all strong, sturdy, and they began a terrific battle on the west mountain slope. *Marvellous fight! The vile, vicious demon mocks the true Self. The true Self's so gentle what'd it do? 100 plans used up, they can't escape their pain. 1000 schemes cannot achieve their peace. The gods lend their protection; the sages help with their arms. Wood-Mum may still be kind but Yellow Dame has made up its mind. Their brawl stirs Heaven and shakes the Earth; their fight expands like a net spread out. On this side, banners wave and soldiers shout; on that side, they roll drums and beat gongs. A mass of swords and spears coldly gleaming; thick rows of halberds veiled in deathly pall. The fiendish troops are so fierce and brave, what'd those divine fighters do? Wretched clouds hide both sun and moon; grievous fog shroud mountains and streams. They strain and struggle in a bitter row, all for to God Tang Monk's faulty salute.* Growing fiercer all the time, the monster-spirit led his troops to charge repeatedly. Just at that moment when neither side proved to be the stronger, they heard the roar of Pilgrim: "Old monkey's arrived!"

8 Rules met him and asked, "Where's the luggage?"

"Old monkey almost lost his life already," answered Pilgrim. "Don't mention any luggage!"

Gripping his precious staff, Sand-monk said, "Stop talking now! We must go fight the monster-spirit!"

The star spirits and those Gods of Darkness and Light by now were encircled completely by the various fiends, and the old fiend wielded his club to attack the three of them. Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk opened up their rod, staff, and rake to meet him head-on. They fought till truly the Heaven grew dim and the Earth darkened but they could not prevail against the demon. They fought some more until the sun sank down in the west and the moon arose in the east. When the fiend saw that it was getting late, he signalled his subjects to be on guard by whistling loudly; then he took out his treasure. When Pilgrim saw clearly that the fiend had untied his wrap and held it in his hand, he cried, "Look out! Let's run!"

Without further regard for 8 Rules, Sand-monk, and the other gods, he somersaulted all the way up to the 9-fold Heaven. The gods and his companions however, were not quick enough to understand why he fled, and they were all captured once more inside the wrap after the monster-spirit had thrown it in the air. Only Pilgrim thus managed to escape. After the monster-king and his troops returned to the monastery, he asked for ropes again and ordered the prisoners to be tied up as before. The Tang Monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk were to be hung up high on the rafters while the white horse was to be tied up in the back. After the deities had been trussed up, they were to be thrown into the cellar and the entrance would be covered and sealed. The little fiends obeyed each of his instructions. Pilgrim had leaped up to the 9-fold Heaven and succeeded in preserving his life. When he saw the withdrawal of the fiendish troops with banners lowered, he knew that his companions had been captured. Lowering his auspicious luminosity onto the eastern slope of the mountain, *he hated, teeth grinding, the fiend; he thought of the monk, shedding tears. Lifting his face to stare skyward, he sighed sadly and voiced his fears.* "O, Master!" he cried. "In which previous disciple did you incur such ordeals of bondage, that you must in this life face monster-spirits every step of the way! It's so hard now to rid you of your sufferings. What'll we do?" He lamented like that all by himself for a long time, and then he began to calm himself and think, allowing the mind to question the mind. *I wonder what sort of wrap this fiendish demon's, he thought to himself, that can hold so many things. Now he's even hauled away all those celestial warriors! I'd go seek the Jade Emperor for assistance but I fear he might take offence. I recall however, that there's a True Warrior of the North<sup>10</sup> whose style is the Demon-Conquering Celestial Worthy, and who lives in the Wudang Mountain<sup>11</sup> of the South Jambūdvīpa Continent. Let me go fetch him here to rescue Master from this ordeal.* Truly it is that, *the mortal way undone, ape and horse disperse; 5 Phases dry up when mind and spirit are lost.*

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### Many gods meet injury; Maitreya binds a fiend

The Great Sage Sun had no alternative but to mount an auspicious cloud by means of his somersault to head directly for the Wudang Mountain on the South Jambūdvīpa Continent where he hoped to solicit the help of the Demon-Conquering Celestial Worthy to rescue Tripitaka, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk, and the various celestial warriors from their ordeal. Without a moment's pause in mid-air, he soon caught sight of the patriarch's mortal realm. Gently lowering his cloud, he stared around. It's a *marvellous place! Grandly it guards the southeast, this towering divine mountain. The soaring Hibiscus Peak: the rugged Purple-Canopy Summit. 9 Streams<sup>1</sup> flow from it to distant Jing and Yang. <sup>2</sup>It joins the Yue Mountains reaching the state of Chu. On top are the treasure cave of Grand-Void, the numinous Estrada of Bullseye and Lu. <sup>3</sup>Golden stones resound in 36 halls where to offer incense 10000 pilgrims come. King Shun visits it and King Yu prays at this place<sup>4</sup> adorned with jade tablets and letters of gold. Bluebirds fly about the towers; banners flap like scarlet skirts. A land set on a mountain famed in all the world, a Heaven-born region touching the spacious void. A few sprigs of plum trees just now in bloom; a mountain of rare grasses spreading their verdure. Dragons lie beneath the brooks; tigers crouch by the cliffs. The birds sound as if they're talking; by people tame deer are walking. White cranes perch with clouds on old junipers; facing the sun, blue and red phoenixes recite. This has the looks of a true, mortal realm where portals of gold and mercy rule the world.* The august patriarch was the off spring of King Pure Joy and Queen Triumphant Virtue who was conceived with child after she dreamed that she had swallowed the sun. After carrying the child for fourteen months, she gave birth to him in the palace at noon on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month in the *Jiachen* year that was the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the Kaihuang reign period. This Holy Dad was *fierce and bold in his youth, astute and keen when he grew up. Declining the throne of kingship, he sought only austerities. His parents could not stop him from leaving the royal palace. The mysteries and meditation he embraced on this mountain. Merit and work accomplished, he rose in daylight to Heaven. The Jade Emperor forthwith decreed that he be titled Zhenwu.* Above, the dark void blessed him; below, the snake and turtle<sup>5</sup> joined him; the entire Heaven and Earth addressed him as All-Efficacious from whom no secret was hidden for whom no act ever met failure. He routed the demon-spirits from start to end of each kalpa. As he was enjoying the sight of this mortal scenery, the Great Sage Sun soon arrived before the Palace of Grand Harmony, having passed through the 1<sup>st</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven gates. There in the midst of hallowed light and auspicious air he found a group of 500 spirit-ministers who met him and said, "Who're you?"

"I'm Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven," replied the Great Sage, "and I'd like to have an audience with the patriarch." After the spirit-ministers went inside to make the report, the patriarch left the main hall to escort his visitor into the Palace of Grand Harmony. Pilgrim saluted the patriarch and said, "I must trouble you with a matter."

"What's it?" the patriarch asked.

"I was accompanying the Tang Monk on his way to the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures," said Pilgrim, "and our path has landed us in a dangerous ordeal. At the West Aparagodāṇīya Continent, there is a mountain by the name of the Little Western Heaven, in which a demonic fiend has set up a Little Thunderclap Monastery. When my master entered the monastery gate and laid eyes on rows of Arhats, guardians, beggars, and sage monks, he thought that he had come upon the real God. Just as he bent low to salute them, he was seized and bound. I, too was caught off guard and was clamped within a pair of gold cymbals that the fiend threw up into the air. Those cymbals had me completely sealed inside, and there was not even the slightest crack for me to escape. It was a good thing that the Golden-Headed Guardian went to memorialise to the Jade Emperor who commanded the Twenty-Eight Constellations to descend to earth that very night. Even they however, could not pry the cymbals open. Luckily, Gullet the Gold Dragon managed to pierce the cymbals with his horn and took me out with him. I smashed the cymbals afterwards and aroused the fiendish creature. When he gave chase and fought with us, he threw up a white cloth wrap which had all of us, including the Twenty-Eight Constellations, stored away. We're tied up with ropes once more but that evening I managed to escape and free the Constellations and our Tang Monk. Thereafter, my search for our robe and alms-bowl again disturbed the fiend who chased us down once more to do battle with the celestial warriors. When that fiend took out his white cloth wrap and fiddled with it, I recognised his verses and fled at once. The rest of my companions were stored up by him as before. I'd no other alternative but to come here to beg assistance from the patriarch."

The patriarch said, "In years past, I ruled over the north and that was the reason I'd assumed the position of Zhenwu to extirpate the fiends and deviates of the world by the decree of the Jade Emperor. Thereafter, by the command of the Celestial Worthy of Original Commencement I led with loosened hair and naked feet and with the soaring serpent and divine turtle under my feet, the Five Thunder Deities, the huge-maned lion, and various ferocious beasts and poisonous dragons to subjugate the dark and fiendish miasmas of the northeast. Today I'm enjoying the peace of Wudang Mountain and the serenity of the Palace of Grand Harmony, the calm seas and clear universe, only because the fiendish demons and devious spirits have all been exterminated in our South Jambūdvīpa Continent and in our North Uttarakuru Continent. Now that the Great Sage has come to make this request, it is difficult for me not to respond but without the decree from the Region Above, it is also difficult for me to respond in arms. If I were to send forth the gods with my formal command, I fear that the Jade Emperor would be offended. But if I refuse the Great Sage, I'd go utterly against human sentiments. I suppose however, that those fiends on the road to the West could not be too terribly formidable. I'll ask Turtle and Serpent, the two generals, and the Five Divine Dragons to assist you. I'm certain they will capture the monster-spirit and rescue your master from this ordeal."

After he saluted to thank the patriarch, Pilgrim went back to the region of the West accompanied by Serpent, Turtle, and the dragon deities, all wielding their powerful weapons. In less than a day they arrived at the Little Thunderclap Monastery where they dropped from the clouds and began to provoke battle before the monastery gate. The Great King Yellow Brow gathered the various fiends below his treasure tower and said, "These two days Pilgrim Sun's not even shown up. I wonder where he's gone to seek help." Hardly had he finished speaking when the little fiend guarding the gate came in to report: "Pilgrim is leading several persons with the looks of dragon, serpent, and turtle to provoke battle outside our gate."

"How did this little monkey," said the demon, "manage to acquire people with looks like that? Where did such people come from?"

He put on his armour immediately and walked out of the monastery gate, crying, "What dragon deities are you that you dare transgress our mortal territory?" With looks most rugged and spirited, the five dragons and the two generals shouted, "You brazen fiend! We're the Five Dragon Deities and Turtle and Serpent, the two generals, before the Demon-Conquering Celestial Worthy who is the Pontiff of Composite Prime in the Palace of Grand Harmony, located on Wudang Mountain. By the invitation of the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, and the amulet summons of the Celestial Worthy, we came here to arrest you. You, monster-spirit, send out the Tang Monk and the Constellations quickly and we'll spare your life. If not, we'll hew to pieces the fiends of this entire mountain, and we'll burn to ashes your several buildings!"

On hearing this, the fiend grew enraged. "You beasts!" he cried. "What great magic power do you've that you dare mouth big words like that? Don't run away! Have a taste of my club!"

Whereupon these 5 dragons churned up cloud and rain and those 2 generals sprayed dust and dirt as they rushed forward together to attack with spears, scimitars, swords, and halberds. The Great Sage Sun, too followed them, wielding his iron rod. This was another terrific battle: *the vicious demon used force – Pilgrim sought armed assistance – the vicious demon used force as he took a precious tower to set up a god's form; Pilgrim sought armed assistance, going far to a treasure region for the dragon gods. Turtle and Serpent started water and fire; the fiend raised weapons and arms. 5 dragons were ordered to the Westward way followed by Pilgrim for his master's sake. Swords and halberds flashed like electric bolts; spears and knives glowed like lightning bright. The wolf-teeth club of this 1 strong but short and pliant; the golden-hooped rod of that 1, both yielding and compliant. 1 hears loud bangs, booms like firecrackers, and clanging chords like gold being struck. Water and fire came to conquer the fiend; arms and weapons encircled a monster-spirit. Their cries startled tigers and wolves; brawl alarmed spirits and gods. This raucous battle had just reached a draw when the demon seized the treasures once more.* Leading the five dragons and the two generals, Pilgrim battled the demon for half an hour. Then the fiend untied his wrap and held it in his hand. Alarmed by what he saw, Pilgrim shouted, "Be careful, all of you!" Not realising why they had to be careful, the dragon deities, the turtle, and the serpent all lowered their weapons and stepped forward to look. With a loud whoosh, the monster-spirit threw up the wrap again. Unable to care for the five dragons and the two generals any longer, the Great Sage Sun leaped up to the 9-fold Heaven with his somersault and fled. Those dragon deities along with the turtle and the serpent were stored up also in the wrap and taken captive. After the monster-spirit returned to the monastery in triumph, he had his prisoners bound with ropes and locked in the underground cellar. *Look at the Great Sage who dropped down from the clouds!* Reclining listlessly on the mountain slope, he said spitefully to himself, "This fiendish creature's most formidable!"

Unwittingly his eyes became shut and he looked as if he had fallen asleep. Suddenly he heard someone crying, "Great Sage, don't sleep! Go get help quickly! Your master's life won't last very long!" Opening wide his eyes and leaping up, Pilgrim saw that it was the Day Sentinel. "You clumsy deity!" shouted Pilgrim. "Where have you been all this time lusting after your bloody offerings? You've not shown up to answer your roll call, and yet you dare come to disturb me today! Stick out your shanks, and let old monkey give you a couple of strokes of my rod – just to relieve my boredom!"

Saluting hurriedly, the sentinel said, "Great Sage, you're the joyous mortal among men. How could *you* be bored? By the decree of the Nun, all of us are to give secret protection to the Tang Monk. We thus work with the local spirits and the like, not daring to leave him at all. That's why we've not come to see you. How could you blame us instead?"

"If you're giving him protection," said Pilgrim, "tell me where has that monster-spirit imprisoned my master, the Constellations, the guardians, the protectors of monasteries, and the rest of them? What sort of suffering are they enduring now?"

"Your master and brothers," replied the sentinel, "are all hanging in the corridor by the side of the treasure hall while the Constellations have been herded into the underground cellar to suffer there. We've had no news from you for these two days. Only when we saw just now that the monster-spirit had captured some divine dragons, a turtle, and a snake, and sent these, too, into the cellar did we realise that they were warriors fetched here by the Great Sage. Your humble deity came especially to find you. The Great Sage mustn't grow weary. You must go again quickly to seek help."

When he heard these words, Pilgrim began to shed tears as he said to the sentinel, "At this moment, *I'm ashamed to go up to Heaven, embarrassed to go down to the seas. I dread the Nun's queries; I'm sad to see a god's jade mien.* Those who'd been taken captive just now were Turtle, Snake, and the Five Dragon sages of Patriarch Zhenwu. I've no other place to go for help. What I'm to do?"

Smiling, the sentinel said, "Please don't worry, Great Sage. Your humble deity can think of another powerful army that'll certainly subdue this monster if you succeed in bringing it here. Just now the great sage went to Wudang of the South Jambūdvīpa Continent. Well, this army's also stationed at the same continent in the city of Bincheng on the Xuyi Mountain, what's now called Sizhou. Located there is the Preceptor of State-King Nun who has vast magic powers. Under his tutelage is a disciple of his by the name of Prince Little Zhang. He has in his service also four great divine warriors who brought to submission in years past the Lady Water Mum. If you go there now in person and ask for his kind assistance, I'm certain that the fiend will be captured and your master rescued."

Delighted, Pilgrim said, “You go back to protect my master and don’t let him be harmed. Let old monkey go for help.” Mounting his cloud somersault, Pilgrim left the fiend’s place and headed straight for the Xuyi Mountain. He arrived there in less than a day. *It’s a marvellous place indeed as he stared at it carefully! To the south it’s near river fords; to the north, it presses on the River Huai; to the east it reaches the sea coast; to the west it connects with Fengfou. On the peak there are towering edifices; in its fold there are surging streams. Strange, craggy boulders; handsome, knotty pines; 100 kinds of fruits all in season and fresh; 1000 sprigs of flowers blooming in the sun. People teeming like ants, go back and forth; like rows of wild geese the boats come and leave. On top there are the Temple of Auspicious Cliff, the Palace of Eastern Mountain, the Shrine of 5 Miracles, and the Monastery of Turtle Mountain where bell-tones and incense rise toward the sky. There are also the Crystal Stream, the 5 Pagoda Valley, the Mortals Terrace, and the Apricot Garden – all lighting up the city with their pastoral hues. Languid white clouds stretch overhead; birds, though tired, serenely recite. Why mention the charm of Tai, Song, Heng, and Flower? \*Here’s mortal beauty like Peng and Ying!* The Great Sage could hardly make an end of enjoying this scenery. After he passed the River Huai, he went through the city of Bincheng and went up to the gate of the Great Sage Chan Monastery where he found magnificent halls and elegant long corridors. There was moreover a towering pagoda, truly *1000 cubits tall, jabbing clouds and sky, a golden flask piercing the jade-green void. Up and down its halo holds the universe; not 1 shade darkens its screens both east and west. Treasure bells windblown, will make celestial chimes; shell-bark pines, sun-drenched, face this Sanskrit hall. Spirit birds speak frequently in flight or rest when you gaze on the Huai’s endless eddy.* Enjoying the scenery as he walked along, Pilgrim went straight up to the second-level door. By then the Preceptor of State-King Nun had already learned of his arrival and he went out of the door with Prince Little Zhang to meet his visitor. After they saluted each other, Pilgrim said, “I’m accompanying the Tang Monk to go to the Western Heaven for scriptures. On our way we ran into The Little Thunderclap Monastery where a Yellow Brow Fiend disguised himself as the Religious patriarch. Unable to distinguish the true from the false, my master immediately saluted before him and was caught. The fiend then had me sealed inside a pair of cymbals but fortunately I was rescued by the Constellations descending from Heaven. I smashed his cymbals and fought with him but he used a cloth wrap and took captive all of the gods, the guardians, my master, and brothers. I went just now to the Wudang Mountain to seek the help of the August One of the Mysterious Heaven who ordered the Five Dragons, Turtle, and Serpent to capture the fiend. But they, too were caught by his wrap. Your disciple’s now neither refuge nor home and that’s why he’s come especially to see the Nun. I beg you to exercise your mighty power – the magic that brought the Water-Mum to submission and the wondrous potency that redeemed the multitudes – and go with your disciple to rescue his master from this ordeal. When we succeed in acquiring the scriptures so that they may be forever implanted in China, we’ll proclaim the wisdom of our God and his everlasting perfection.”

“Your affair today,” said the Preceptor of State-King, “indeed concerns the prosperity of our Religious religion, and I’d go with you in person. But this is early summer, a time when the River Huai threatens to overflow. It was only recently that I brought to submission the Great Sage Water Ape.” That fellow however, tends to grow restless whenever he comes into contact with water. I fear that my departure from this place will lure him into mischief, and there’s no other god who can bring him under control. Let me ask my young disciple and four other warriors under his command to go with you. They’ll assist you in capturing this demon.” Pilgrim gave thanks before mounting the clouds with Prince Little Zhang and the four warriors to return to the Little Thunderclap Monastery.

Prince Little Zhang used a mulberry-white lance while the four warriors all wielded red-steel swords. When they went forward with the Great Sage Sun to provoke battle, the little fiends again went inside to report. Leading the rest of the monsters, the fiendish king came roaring out and cried, “Monkey! What other persons have you brought here this time?” Ordering the four warriors forward, Prince Little Zhang shouted, “You lawless monster-spirit! You’ve no flesh on your face and no pupils in your eyes, and that’s why you can’t recognise us.”

“Where are you from, little warrior,” said the fiendish king, “that you dare come here to give him assistance?”

“I’m the disciple of the Preceptor of State-King Nun,” replied the prince, “the Great Sage of Sizhou. These’re the four divine warriors under my command who’ve been ordered here to arrest you.”

With a laugh, the fiendish king said, “What sort of martial prowess does a little boy like you possess that you dare to be so insulting?”

“If you want to know about my martial prowess,” said the prince, “listen to my recital: *The state, Flowing Sand, was my ancestral home. My dad’s Flowing Sand Kingdom’s king. Illness plagued me at the time of youth, a victim of a baleful natal star. For long life I sought a teacher far away; I was lucky to meet him and be given a cure. Half a pellet and my ailments dispelled, I left my prince-ship to follow his way and acquired the art of never growing old. My features are those of eternal youth! I’ve attended God’s Birthday Feast. I’ve trod the clouds to reach his great hall. I’ve caught a water fiend with the wind and fog; I’ve tamed tigers and dragons on the mount. The grateful race built me a pagoda tall and sari light illumed the deep, calm sea. My mulberry lance’s quick to bind a fiend; cleric sleeve can a monster subdue. In Bincheng now a peaceful life I lead; the earth resounds with fame of Little Zhang.*”

When the fiendish king heard what was said, he smiled scornfully saying, “Prince, what method of longevity did you manage to cultivate when you left your own country and followed that Preceptor of State-King Nun? I suppose good enough to capture a water fiend of the River Huai! How’d you allow those false and specious words of Pilgrim Sun to goad you across a thousand hills and ten thousand waters and into surrendering your life here? You think you still have long life without growing old when you look me up!”

Enraged by what he heard, Little Zhang picked up the lance and stabbed at his opponent’s face while the 4 great warriors also joined in the attack at once. The Great Sage Sun, too struck with his iron rod. *Dear monster-spirit!* Not the least daunted, he wielded his short, plant, wolf-teeth club and parried the blows left and right, charging forward and sideways. *This was another fierce battle! The youthful prince, his mulberry-white lance, and 4 even stronger red-steel swords. Wukong, too used his golden-hooped rod to encircle together the fiendish king who possessed vast magic powers in truth. Not daunted at all, he charged left and right. The wolf-teeth club being a Religious prize could not be harmed by blows of spear and sword. 1 could only hear the howl of violent gale; 1 could only see the dark, baleful air. That 1 in worldly lust would show his ability; that 1 steadfastly sought God for the holy writ. They dashed about a few times; battled now and again. Belched out cloud and fog concealed the 3 Lights. \*Their anger and wrath would do each other ill. All for the 3 Vehicles’ perfect law 100 arts engaged in bitter strife.* The multitude fought for a long time but no decision could be reached. Once more the monster-spirit untied his wrap and again Pilgrim cried out, “Be careful, all of you!” The prince and the rest of the warriors however, did not comprehend what Pilgrim meant by *be careful!* With a loud whoosh, the fiend also wrapped up the prince and the four great warriors. Only the prescience of Pilgrim enabled him to escape. Returning in triumph to the monastery, the fiendish king again had his prisoners bound with ropes and sent to be locked up in the underground cellar. Mounting his cloud somersault, Pilgrim rose to mid-air, and he lowered his auspicious luminosity only after he saw the fiend had withdrawn his troops and shut the gates. As he stood on the west mountain slope, he wept dejectedly saying, “Oh, Master! *Since I entered by faith the grove of Chan when from my ordeal Guanyin set me free, I squired you westward to seek the great Way and by mutual help, hoped Thunderclap to see. We thought our twisted path would smooth out at last, not knowing such fiendish siege there would be. A thousand plans seem hard to have you saved. Vain efforts east and west had stalked my plea.*”

As the Great Sage was thus grieving, he suddenly saw toward the southwest a coloured cloud descending to earth as torrential rain fell on the mountain. “Wukong,” someone called out, “do you recognise me?”

Running forward to have a look, Pilgrim came upon a person with *huge ears, jutting jaw, and a square-like face; broad shoulders, large belly, and stout-ish grace. His complexion was filled with joys of spring; 2 autumnal pools were his eyes sparkling. His wide sleeves flapped and fluttered with good luck; in smart straw sandals he looked full of pluck. The first among the blissful ones of worth, all hail to Maitreya, the monk of mirth!* On seeing him, Pilgrim quickly respected saying, “Religious Patriarch coming from the East, where’re you going? Your disciple’s improperly barred your way! I’m guilty of ten thousand crimes!”

“I came,” replied the Religious patriarch, “especially on account of the fiend in the Little Thunderclap.”

“I’m grateful for the profound grace and virtue of the holy dad,” said Pilgrim. “May I ask from what region did that fiend originate? What sort of treasure is that wrap of his? I beg the holy dad to reveal it to me.”

The patriarch said, “He happens to be a yellow-browed youth in charge of striking the sonorous stone before me. On the third day of the third month, I went to attend a festival of Original Commencement and left him to guard my palace. He stole several treasures of mine and, disguising himself as God, became a spirit. That wrap is my fertility bag, its common name being ‘The Bag of Human Seed.’ That wolf-teeth club is the mallet for striking the sonorous stone.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim raised his voice to a shout: “Dear laughing monk! You let this boy escape to give himself the false name of Religious patriarch and to ensnare old monkey. Aren’t you guilty of negligence in domestic governance?”

“It is my negligence in the first place,” said Maitreya, “but it is also because you and your master have yet to pass through all your *mara* hindrances. That is why a hundred deities must descend to earth to inflict upon you your fated ordeals. I’ve come now to bring this fiend to submission for you.”

“But the monster-spirit,” said Pilgrim, “has vast magic powers. You don’t even have a weapon. How could you bring him to submission?”

Laughing, Maitreya said, “I’ll set up below this mountain slope a grass hut and a huge melon field. You go to provoke battle but you’re not permitted to win when you fight with him. Lure him to my melon field. All my melons however, will be raw but you yourself will change into a large, ripe melon. When he arrives, he will certainly want to eat some melon, and I’ll present you for him to eat. When he swallows you into his stomach, you may do whatever you please with him. By then, I’d be able to retrieve that wrap from him and take him back inside it.”

“Although this is a marvellous plan,” said Pilgrim, “I wonder how you’d be able to recognise the ripe melon that will be my transformation. Moreover, how would he be willing to follow me here?” Laughing again, Maitreya replied, “I’m the Worthy who governs the world. How could my percipient eyes of wisdom not recognise you? You may change into whatever you like and I’ll recognise you. But fearing that the fiend might not want to pursue you, I’ll teach you some magic.”

“What he most certainly wants to do,” said Pilgrim, “is to catch me with that wrap of his. He’ll not chase me here! What sort of magic do you’ve that will make him come here?” Smiling, Maitreya said, “Stretch forth your hand.”

Pilgrim stretched out his left palm; dipping his right index finger into his mouth, Maitreya wrote on his palm the word, restrain with the divine saliva. Pilgrim was told to hold his left hand in a fist and open it only toward the face of the monster-spirit. Then the monster-spirit would certainly follow him.

Holding fast his fist and obeying amiably these instructions, Pilgrim wielded his iron rod with a single hand and went before the monastery gate. “Fiendish demon,” he cried, “your Holy Dad Sun’s here again! Come out quickly so that we may decide who’s the stronger!”

Those little fiends again dashed inside to make the report. “How many warriors has he brought with him this time?” asked the fiendish king. “There are no other warriors,” replied one of the little fiends. “He’s the only one.”

“That little monkey has used up all his plans and exhausted his strength,” said the fiendish king, laughing. “He has nowhere to go to ask for help, and he has just come to give up his life for sure.”

After he had put on his armour properly, the fiend took his treasure and held up his light and soft wolf-teeth club to walk out of the door. “Sun Wukong,” he cried, “you can’t struggle anymore this time!”

“Brazen fiend!” scolded Pilgrim. “What do you mean that I can’t struggle anymore?”

“I see that you’ve used up all your plans and exhausted your strength,” said the fiendish king. “You’ve nowhere to go for help, and you’ve forced yourself here to do battle. There won’t be any divine warriors to assist you this time, and that’s why I say you can’t struggle anymore.”

Pilgrim said, “This fiend doesn’t know what’s good for him! Stop bragging! Have a taste of my rod!” When the fiendish king saw that he was wielding the rod with only one hand, he could not refrain from laughing. “This little ape!” he said. “Look how mischievous he is! Why are you fooling around with only one hand?”

“My son,” said Pilgrim, “you can’t stand up to the attack of both my hands! If you don’t use your wrap, even if there are three or five of you, you’ll be unable to overcome this one hand of old monkey.”

On hearing this, the fiendish king said, “All right, all right! I’ll not use my treasure. I’ll fight in earnest with you this time, and we’ll see who’s the stronger.” Thereupon he raised his wolf-teeth club to rush into battle. Aiming directly at his face, Pilgrim let loose his fist before gripping the iron rod with both his hands. The monster-spirit was immediately bound by the spell; with no thought at all for retreat or for using the wrap, he only had in mind using the club to attack his opponent. After delivering a weak blow with his rod, Pilgrim immediately retreated, and the monster-spirit chased him all the way to the west mountain slope.

When Pilgrim saw the melon field, he rolled right into it and changed at once into a huge melon, both ripe and sweet. The monster-spirit stood still and glanced everywhere but he did not know where Pilgrim had gone to. When he ran up to the grass hut, he cried, “Who’s the planter of these melons?” Having changed himself into a melon farmer, Maitreya walked out of the hut, saying, “Great King, I’m the one who has planted them.”

“You’ve any ripe ones?” asked the fiendish king. “Yes,” replied Maitreya. “Pick a ripe one for me to relieve my thirst,” cried the fiendish king.

Maitreya at once presented with both hands the melon into which Pilgrim had changed himself. Without even examining it, the fiendish king took it and began to bite at it. Using this opportunity, Pilgrim somersaulted at once down his throat, and without waiting for another moment, he began to flex his limbs. He grabbed the intestines and bent the stomach; he did handstands, cartwheels, and whatever he felt like doing at the time. The pain was so intense that the monster-spirit clenched his teeth and opened wide his mouth as big drops of tears welled up in his eyes. He rolled so hard on the ground that the patch of melon field was completely flattened like a plot of land for pounding grain. “Finished! Finished!” he could only mutter. “Who will save me?”

Changing into his original form, Maitreya giggled loudly and said, “Cursed beast! You recognise me?” When the fiend raised his head and saw the figure before him, he went hurriedly to his knees. Hugging his stomach with both hands and pounding his head on the ground, he cried, “My lord! Please spare my life! Please spare my life! I’ll never dare do this again!” Maitreya strode forward and grabbed the fiend. After he had untied the bag of fertility and taken away the mallet for striking the sonorous stone, he cried, “Sun Wukong, for my sake, please spare him.” Pilgrim however, was so bitter that he started punching and kicking left and right, madly pounding and scratching inside. Unable to bear the terrible pain, the fiend slumped to the ground.

“Wukong,” cried Maitreya again, “he’s had enough! Spare him!”

Only then did Pilgrim cry, “Open wide your mouth, and let old monkey come out.” Though that fiend had been racked by sharp pains in his stomach, his heart had not yet been hurt. As the proverb says: *Before the heart breaks a person can’t die; flowers fade and leaves drop when roots are dry.* When he heard that he should open wide his mouth, he did so at once, trying desperately to endure the pain. Pilgrim leaped out, and, as he changed back into his original form, he wanted immediately to strike with his rod. The monster-spirit however, had already been stuffed into the wrap by the Religious patriarch and fastened to his waist. Picking up the sonorous stone mallet, the patriarch said, “Cursed beast! Where’re the stolen cymbals?” Having only concern for his life, the fiend in the bag of fertility moaned, “The gold cymbals were smashed by Sun Wukong.” “If they have been smashed,” said the Religious patriarch, “return my gold.” The fiend said, “The gold fragments are piled on the lotus throne in the hall.” Holding the bag and the mallet, the Religious patriarch said giggling, “Wukong, I’ll go look for my gold with you.” When Pilgrim saw this kind of religion power, he did not dare tarry another moment. He had no other alternative in fact than to lead a god up the mountain to return to the monastery where they found the gates tightly shut. The Religious patriarch pointed his mallet at them and at once the gates flew open. When they went inside, all the little fiends were just in the process of packing and fleeing, having learned already that the old fiend had been captured. When Pilgrim ran into them, he struck them down one by one until some 700 of them were slain. As they revealed their original forms, they were all spirits of mountains and trees, the monsters of beasts and fowl. After the Religious patriarch had gathered the gold fragments together, he blew at them a mouthful of divine breath and recited a spell. Immediately they changed back into their original form of a pair of gold cymbals. He then took leave of Pilgrim and mounted the auspicious clouds to return to the world of ultimate bliss. Thereafter Great Sage untied the Tang Monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk from the rafters. Having been hung for several days, Idiot was so hungry that he did not even bother to thank the Great Sage. His torso bent low, he dashed into the kitchen to try to find rice to eat. The fiend was just preparing lunch but he was interrupted when Pilgrim came to provoke battle. When Idiot saw the rice, he ate half a pot first before taking two large bowls to his master and brother. Then they thanked Pilgrim and asked about the defeat of the fiend. Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how he went first to solicit the help of the Taoist patriarch and his 2 warriors, turtle and serpent how he went next to see the Great Sage and the prince and finally how Maitreya brought the fiend to submission. When Tripitaka heard this, he could not make an end of his thanksgiving for all the gods. “Disciple,” he said afterwards, “where’re these gods and sages imprisoned?” “The Day-Sentinel told me yesterday that they’d all been sent to an underground cellar,” replied Pilgrim. “Eight Rules, you and I must go and free them.” After he had had some food, Idiot had grown strong once more. Picking up his muckrake, he went to the rear with the Great Sage and broke open the cellar door to untie all the prisoners. When they came back out to the jewelled tower, Tripitaka put on his cassock to salute each one of the deities to thank them. Thereafter the Great Sage sent the 5 dragons and 2 warriors back to Wudang, Prince Little Zhang and the 4 warriors back to Bincheng, and finally the 28 Constellations back to Heaven. The guardians and the protectors of monasteries, too were released to return to their stations. Master and disciples then rested for half a day at the monastery where they also fed the white horse and tidied up the luggage before starting out again in the morning. As they left, they lit a fire and had all those jewelled towers, treasure thrones, tall turrets, and lecture halls reduced to ashes. So it was that *without care or hindrance, they escaped their ordeal; their calamity dispelled, they were free to leave.*

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Having rescued Tuoluo, Chan Nature’s secure; escaping filthiness, the Mind of Dao’s pure

Tripitaka and his 3 disciples who set out on the road once more, glad to have left the Little Western Heaven. They spent about a month travelling and now it was the time of late spring when flowers blossomed. They saw the green fading at various gardens and groves, and a sudden squall of wind and rain brought the evening near. Reining in his horse, Tripitaka said, “O disciples, it’s getting late! Which road shall we take to find lodging?” “Master, relax!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “Even if there’s no place for us to ask for lodging, the three of us at least have some abilities. You may ask 8 Rules to chop some grass and Sand-monk to cut down a few pine trees. Old monkey knows how to play carpenter. I can build for you right by the road a little thatched hut in which you can live for at least a year. Why are you so anxious?” “Oh, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “a place like this is not fit to be lived in! The whole mountain is full of tigers and wolves, and there are spirits and goblins everywhere. Even in daylight it’s difficult enough to get through. How dare you rest here at night?” “Idiot,” said Pilgrim, “you’re regressing more and more! Old monkey isn’t bragging but this rod I hold in my hands can even hold up the sky – if it collapses!” As master and disciples were conversing like that, they suddenly caught sight of a mountain village not far away. “Marvellous!” said Pilgrim. “We’ve a place for the night.” “Where?” asked the elder. Pointing with his finger, Pilgrim replied, “Isn’t that a household over there beneath the trees? We can go over there to ask for one night’s lodging. Tomorrow we’ll leave.” Delighted, the elder urged on his horse and went up to the entrance of the village before he dismounted. As the wooden gates were tightly shut, the elder knocked on them, saying, “Open the door! Open the door!” From within a house an old man emerged: he had a staff in his hands, rush sandals on his feet, a black cloth wrap on his head, and a plain white robe on his body. As he opened the door, he asked immediately, “Who’s making all these noises here?” Folding his hands before his chest, Tripitaka saluted deeply and said, “Old patron, this humble priest is one sent from the Land of the East to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. It was getting late when we arrived at your honoured region. We’ve come, therefore, especially to ask you for one night’s lodging. I beg you to grant us this boon.” “Monk,” said the old man, “you may want to go to the West but you can’t get there. This is only the Little Western Heaven. If you want to go to the Great Western Heaven, the distance is exceedingly great, not to mention all the difficulties ahead of you. Even this region here will be hard for you to pass through.” “What do you mean by hard to pass through?” asked Tripitaka. Pointing with his hand, the old man said, “Approximately thirty miles west of our village there is a Pulpary Persimmon Alley, located in a mountain by the name of Seven Extremes.” “Why do you call it Seven Extremes?” asked Tripitaka again. The old man said, “The mountain is about eight hundred miles across, and the whole mountain is full of persimmon fruit. According to the ancients, ‘There are seven types of extreme characteristics of the persimmon tree. They are: long-lasting, shady without birds’ nests, wormless, lovely leaves when frosted, hardy fruits, and large, luxuriant branches.’” Hence it is called the Mountain of Seven Extremes. Our humble region here however, is large but sparsely inhabited, and since the time of antiquity, hardly anyone has ever journeyed deep into the mountain. Every year the persimmons, ripened and rotted, would fall on the ground and completely fill up the mountain path that is shaped like an alley flanked by boulders on both sides. After the frost and snow of the winter and the heat of the summer, the road would become one of such horrid filth that the families of this region nicknamed it Slimy Shit Alley. Whenever the west wind rises, a terrible stench would drift here, fouler than any privy you may want to clean. Right now it happens to be late spring and we’ve this brisk southeast wind. That’s why you can’t smell it yet.” On hearing this, Tripitaka fell silent, utterly dejected. Unable to contain himself, Pilgrim shouted, “Oldie, you’re rather block-headed! We’ve come from great distance to ask you for lodging, and you’ve to tell us all these things to frighten us! If your house is so crowded that there’s no room for us to sleep in, we can just squat here beneath the trees to spend the night. Why must you be so windy?” Greatly startled by the hideous figure before him, the old man stopped talking for a moment. Then he gathered up enough courage to point his staff at Pilgrim and say in a loud voice, “You! Look at your skeleton face, flattened brow, collapsed nose, jutting jowl, and hairy eyes. A consumptive ghost, no doubt, and yet without any manners at all, you dare use your pointed mouth to offend an elderly person like me!” Trying to placate him with a smile, Pilgrim said, “Venerable Sir, so you’ve eyes but no pupils, and thus you can’t recognise the worth of this consumptive ghost! As the books on physiognomy would say, ‘The features may be strange and bizarre but it is a piece of fine jade hidden in the stone.’ If you judge people only by their looks, you’re completely wrong. I may be ugly but I’ve some abilities!” “Where are you from?” asked the old man. “What are your name and surname? What sort of abilities do you’ve?” With a smile, Pilgrim said, “*East-Videha’s my ancestral home, I did cultivation on Mount Flower-Fruit. I saluted to the Patriarch of Heart, Mind, and perfected with him the martial arts. I can tame dragons, stirring up the seas; tote mountains to chase down the sun. In binding fiends and demons I’m the best; moving stars and planets, I scare ghosts and gods. Stealing from Heaven and Earth gives me great fame, Of boundless change, Handsome Stone Monkey’s my name.*” On hearing these words, the old man’s displeasure turned to delight. He saluted saying, “Please, please come inside to rest in our humble dwelling.” The 4 pilgrims thus led the horse and toted their luggage inside where they saw thorny bushes on both sides of the yard. The second-level door was flanked by stone walls that were covered also by briars and thistles. Finally, they reached three tiled houses in the centre. The old man at once pulled some chairs over for them to be seated and asked for tea to be served. He also gave an order for rice to be prepared. In a little while, some tables were brought out on which were placed dishes of fried wheat gluten, bean curds, taro sprouts, white radishes, mustard greens, green turnips, fragrant rice, and mallow soup made with vinegar. Master and disciples thus enjoyed a full meal. After they finished eating, 8 Rules tugged at Pilgrim and whispered to him, “Elder Brother, this oldie at first didn’t want to give us lodging. Now he gives a sumptuous feast. Why?” “How much could a meal like this be worth?” Pilgrim replied, “Just wait till tomorrow. He’s going to send us off with ten kinds of fruit and ten different dishes!” “You’ve no shame?” said 8 Rules. “So, you managed to wangle a meal from him with those few big words of yours. Tomorrow you’ll be leaving. Why’d he entertain you some more?” “Don’t worry,” replied Pilgrim, “I’ll take care of this.” In a little while, it was almost completely dark, and the old man asked for lamps to be brought out. “*Gong-gong,*” said Pilgrim, saluting, “what’s your noble surname?” “It’s Li,” replied the old man. “I suppose this must be Li Village then,” said Pilgrim. “No,” replied the old man, “for this is called the Tuoluo Village. There are over five hundred families living here with many other surnames. Only I go by the name of Li.” “Patron Li,” said Pilgrim, “what particular good intention has moved you and your family to bestow on us this rich vegetarian feast?” Rising from his seat, the old man said, “I heard you say just now that you’re an expert in catching fiends. We’ve one here and I’d like to ask you to catch him for us. You’ll have a handsome reward.” Saluting immediately to him, Pilgrim said, “Thanks for giving me some business!” “Look how he causes trouble!” exclaimed 8 Rules. “When someone asks him to catch fiends, that person is dearer to him than his maternal grandpa! Without further ado, he salutes already.” “Worthy Brother,” said Pilgrim, “you don’t know about this. My salute’s actually like a down-payment. He’s going to ask no one else.” On hearing this, Tripitaka said, “This little monkey is so egocentric in everything. Suppose that monster-spirit has such vast magic powers that you can’t succeed in catching him. Wouldn’t that make you, someone who has left the family, guilty of falsehood?” “Master, don’t be offended,” said Pilgrim, laughing. “Let me question him further.” “On what?” asked the old man. Pilgrim said, “Your noble region here seems to be a clean and peaceful piece of land. There are, moreover, many families living together, hardly a remote area. What sort of monster-spirit is there who dares approach your high and noble gates?” “To tell you the truth,” said the old man, “our region has enjoyed peace and prosperity for a long time. But three years ago, a violent gust of wind arose during the time of the sixth month. At the time, all the people of our village were out in the fields busily planting rice or beating grain. Quite alarmed by the wind, they thought that the weather had changed. Little did they expect that after the wind a monster-spirit would descend on us and devour all the cattle and livestock left grazing outside. He ate chickens and geese whole, and he swallowed men and women alive. Since that time, he has returned frequently during these past three years to harass us. O elder! If you indeed have the abilities to catch this fiend and cleanse our land, all of us will most surely give you a big reward. We’ll not treat you lightly!” “This kind of monster’s,” Pilgrim said, “quite difficult to catch.” “Difficult indeed!” exclaimed 8 Rules. “We’re only mendicants – we want a night’s lodging from you, and tomorrow we’ll leave. Why should we catch any monster-spirit?” “So, you’re actually priests out to swindle a meal!” said the old man. “When we first met, you’re boasting of how you’d move planets and stars, how you’d bind fiends and monsters. But when I tell you now about the matter, you pass it off as something very difficult.” “Oldie,” said Pilgrim, “the monster-spirit is not hard to catch. It is hard *only* because the families in this region are not of one mind in their efforts.” “In what way are they not of one mind?” asked the old man. “For three years,” Pilgrim replied, “this monster-spirit has been a menace, taking the lives of countless creatures. If each family here were to donate an ounce of silver, I’d think that five hundred families would yield at least five hundred ounces. With that amount of money, you’d hire an exorcist anywhere who would be able to catch the fiend for you. Why did you permit him to torture you for these three years?” “If you bring up the subject of spending money,” said the old man, “I’m embarrassed to death! Which one of our families did not indeed disburse three or four ounces of silver? The year before last we found a monk from the south side of this mountain and invited him to come. But he didn’t succeed.” “How did that monk go about catching the fiend?” asked Pilgrim.



The old man said, *“That man of the Association, He’d on a kasāya. He first quoted the Peacock; then recited the Lotus; burned incense in his urn; grasped with his hand a bell. As he thus recited repeatedly, he aroused the very fiend. Astride the clouds and wind, he came to this village. The monk fought with the fiend in truth some tall tale to tell! One stroke delivered a punch, one stroke delivered a scratch. The monk tried to respond: <sup>2</sup>in response his hair was gone! In a while the fiend triumphed and went back to mist and smoke. (Mere dried scabs being sunned!) We draw near to take a look: the bald head’s beaten like a rotten watermelon!”*

“When you put it like that,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “he really lost out!”

The old man said, “He only paid with his life; we’re the true victims. We’d to buy the coffin for his funeral and give some money to his disciple. That disciple’s however, yet to be satisfied and wants to bring litigation against us even now. What a mess!”

“Did you try to find someone else to catch the monster?” asked Pilgrim again.

The old man replied, “We found a Daoist last year.”

“How did that Daoist go about catching him?” asked Pilgrim.

“That Daoist,” said the old man, *“Wore on his head a gold cap and on himself, a ritual robe. He banged aloud his placard; he waved his charms and water. He sent for gods and spirits but summoned only the ogre. A violent gale blew and churned and black fog dimmed everywhere. The monster and the Daoist, the two went forth to battle. They fought till dusk had set in when the fiend left with the clouds. The cosmos’s bright, fair, and we’re all assembled. Going to search for the Daoist, we found him drowned in a brook, fished him out for a better look: he seemed like a chicken poached in soup!”*

“The way you put it,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “he lost out, too!”

“He only paid with his life, too,” said the old man, “but we’d again to spend all sorts of unnecessary money.”

“Don’t worry! Don’t worry!” said Pilgrim. “Let me catch him for you.”

“If you really have the ability to seize him,” said the old man, “I’ll ask several elders of our village to sign a contract with you. If you win, you may ask whatever amount of money you wish, and we’ll not withhold from you even half a penny. But if you get hurt, don’t accuse us of anything. Let all of us obey the will of Heaven.”

“This oldie is weary of being wrongly accused!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “I’m not that kind of person. Go and fetch the elders quickly.”

Filled with delight, the old man immediately asked a few houseboys to go and invite eight or nine elders to his house – all neighbours, cousins, and in-laws of his. After they met the Tang Monk and had been told of the matter of catching the fiend, they were all very pleased. “Which noble disciple will go forth to catch him?” one elder asked.

With his hands folded before his chest to salute them, Pilgrim said, “This little priest will.” Astonished, the elder said, “That’ll not do! That’ll not do! The monster-spirit has vast magic powers and a hulking body. A lean and tiny priest like you probably won’t even fill the cracks of his teeth!”

“Venerable Sir,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “you’ve not guessed correctly about me! I may be tiny but I’m quite hardy. ‘Having drunk a few drops off the whetstone, I’ve been sharpened up!’” On hearing this, those elders had no alternative but to give their consent. “Elder,” they said, “how much reward do you want after you’ve caught the monster-spirit?”

“Why mention reward?” replied Pilgrim. “As the saying goes, *gold dazzles your eyes; silver is not shiny; copper pennies are stinky!* We’re priests trying to accumulate merit and certainly don’t desire cash rewards.”

“The way you speak,” said one of the elders, “indicates that you’re all noble priests who take your commandments seriously. You may not want cash rewards but we can’t allow you to work for us for free. Now all of us either farm or fish for our livelihood. If you truly can rid us of this cursed fiend and purify our region, each family will donate two acres of the finest land – a thousand acres in all – which will be set aside at one place. All of you, master and disciples, can then build on the land a nice temple or monastery, in which you can meditate and practice Chan. That’s much better than wandering with the clouds all over the world.”

Laughing again, Pilgrim said, “That’s even messier! If you give us land, we’ll have to graze and groom horses, to find feed and make hay. At dusk, we can’t go to bed and by dawn, we still can’t rest. That sort of a life will kill us!”

“If you don’t want all these,” said the elder, “just what do you want as your reward?”

“We’re people who have left the family,” replied Pilgrim. “Give us some tea and rice, and that’s sufficient reward.”

The elders were very pleased. “That sort of reward is easy,” said one of them, “but we’d like to know your plan to catch him?”

“When he comes,” said Pilgrim, “I’ll do it.”

“But that fiend is huge,” said another elder. “He touches Heaven above and Earth beneath. He comes with the wind and departs with the fog. How can you even get near him?”

“If he’s a monster-spirit able to summon the wind and ride the fog,” said Pilgrim with a laugh, “I’ll just treat him as my grandson. If he’s big in size, I still can hit him.”

As they chatted, they suddenly heard the howling of the wind that so terrified those eight or nine elders that they all quaked and quivered. “This priest has such a bad luck mouth!” they cried. “He speaks of the monster-spirit, and at once the monster-spirit shows up!” Flinging wide the side door, that Old Li herded the Tang Monk and his relatives inside, crying, “Come in! Come in! the fiend’s here.” 8 Rules and Sand-monk were so intimidated that they, too, wanted to follow them in entering the house. Pilgrim however, yanked them back with both hands, saying, “Have you lost your senses? Priests like you, how could you behave like that? Stand still! Stay with me in the courtyard so that we can find out what kind of a monster-spirit this is.”

“Oh, Elder Brother!” cried 8 Rules. “These’re all savvy people! When the wind howls, it means the fiend’s coming and that’s why they’re hiding. We’re neither kinfolk nor acquaintances of theirs, neither bond relatives nor old friends. What’s the point of looking at this monster?”

Pilgrim however, was so strong that he was able to hold them down right there in the courtyard as the wind grew even fiercer. *Marvellous wind! It felled woods and trees, daunting tigers and wolves; stirred seas and rivers, alarming gods and ghosts; toppled rocks of Flower Mount’s triple peaks; <sup>3</sup> upturned the world’s 4 great continents. Rustic homes and households all shut their doors; the whole village’s children all hid their heads. Massive black clouds covered the starry sky. Lamps and lights faded as the whole earth grew dark.* 8 Rules was so terrified that he fell on the ground; digging a hole with his horn, he buried his head in it and lay prone as if he had been nailed to the Earth. Sand-monk, too, covered up his head and face, for he found it difficult even to open his eyes. Only Pilgrim sniffed at the wind to try to determine what sort of fiend that was. In a little while the wind subsided and the faint glow of what seemed to be 2 lanterns appeared in mid-air. Lowering his head, Pilgrim said, “Brothers, the wind’s gone! Get up and take a look!”

Pulling out his horn, Idiot shook off the dirt and raised his head skyward. When he saw the two lights, he burst out laughing, crying, “What fun! What fun! So, this monster-spirit is someone who knows properly when to move or rest! We’d befriend him.”

“In a dark night like this,” said Sand-monk, “you’ve not even seen his face yet. How could you know what sort of a person he is?”

8 Rules replied, “The ancient said, *to move by lights at night is best; when there’re no torches, we rest.* “Look at him now! He has a pair of lanterns leading the way. He must be a good man.”

“You’re wrong!” said Sand-monk. “Those aren’t lanterns. They’re the glimmering eyes of the monster-spirit!” Idiot was so appalled that he lost three inches of his height. “Holy Dad!” he cried. “If those are his eyes, how big is his mouth?”

“Don’t be afraid, Worthy Brothers,” said Pilgrim. “Stay here and guard our master. Let old monkey go up there and demand a confession. We’ll see what kind of monster-spirit he is.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “don’t confess that *we’re* here.”

Dear Pilgrim! He whistled loudly and leaped into the air. Gripping his iron rod, he cried out in a loud voice, “Slow down! Slow down! I’m here!” When the fiend saw Pilgrim, he stood erect and began to wave a long lance back and forth in the air. Holding high his rod to assume a position of combat, Pilgrim asked, “From what region a fiend are you? Of what place a spirit are you?” The fiend gave no reply whatever; all he did was to wave his lance. Pilgrim asked again but still there was no reply from the fiend who only persisted in waving the lance. Smiling to himself, Pilgrim said, “You’ve got to be both deaf and dumb! Don’t run away! Watch my rod!”

The fiend however, was not frightened in the least; brandishing his lance, he parried Pilgrim’s blows, and the two of them charged back and forth, up and down, in mid-air. They fought till it was about the hour of the third watch and no decision was reached. Standing down below in the courtyard, 8 Rules and Sand-monk saw everything clearly. The fiend only wielded the lance to parry the blows but he did not attack his opponent at all. Pilgrim’s rod, therefore, hardly ever left the head of the fiend. “Sand-monk,” said 8 Rules with a laugh, “you stand guard here, and let Old bull go and help with the fight. We can’t allow that monkey to make this merit all by himself, or he’ll be rewarded with the first goblet of juice.”

Dear Idiot! He leaped up to the edge of the clouds and attacked at once with his rake that was met by another lance of the fiendish creature. The two lances exercised in the air like flying serpents and flashing thunderbolts. Praising him, 8 Rules said, “This monster-spirit shows great technique with the lance! He’s not using the style of the ‘Mountain-Back Lance,’ but it’s more like the ‘Winding-Silk Lance.’ It’s not the ‘Ma-Family Lance,’ but it probably has the name of the ‘Flabby-Handle Lance.’”

“Stop babbling, Idiot!” said Pilgrim. “There’s no such thing as the ‘Flabby-Handle Lance!’” 8 Rules said, “Just look at how he uses the pointed ends of the lances to parry our blows but the handles of the lances are nowhere to be seen. Where has he hidden them, I wonder?”

“Maybe it is the ‘Flabby-Handle Lance,’” said Pilgrim, “but what’s important is that this fiendish creature does not know how to speak, because he has not yet attained the way of humans. He is still heavily under the influence of the yin aura. In the morning when the yang aura grows stronger, he will certainly want to flee. We must give chase and not let him get away.”

“Exactly! Exactly!” said 8 Rules.

They fought for a long time and then the east paled with light. Not daring to linger, the fiend turned and fled while 8 Rules and Pilgrim gave chase together. As they sped along, they suddenly encountered an oppressively foul stench rising from the Pulpy Persimmon Alley of the Seven Extremes Mountain. “Which family is cleaning its privy?” cried 8 Rules. “Wow! The smell’s horrible!”

Clamping a hand over his nose, Pilgrim could only mutter, “Chase the monster-spirit! Chase the monster-spirit!”

Darting past the mountain, the fiend at once changed back into his original form: a huge, red-scaled python. Look at him! *His eyes flashed forth the stars of dawn; his nose belched out the morning fog. His teeth like dense rows of steel swords; claws curved like golden hooks. <sup>5</sup>From the brow rose a horn of flesh that seemed to be formed by 1000 pieces of carmelian; his whole body was draped in red scales that resembled a million flakes of rouge. Coiled up on earth, he could be confused with a brocade quilt; flying in the air, he could be mistaken for a rainbow. Where he rested, putrid fumes rose to the sky; when he moved, scarlet clouds covered his body. Big enough? People on his east end couldn’t see the west. Long enough? He was like a mountain stretching from pole to pole.* “So, it’s such a long snake!” said 8 Rules. “If it wants to devour people, one meal will probably take five hundred persons, and it’ll still not be filled.”

Pilgrim said, “That ‘Flabby-Handle Lance’ has to be his forked tongue. He has been weakened by our chase. Let’s hit him from behind!”

Bounding forward, 8 Rules brought his rake down hard on the fiendish creature who darted swiftly into a hole. Only 7 or 8 feet of the tail remained outside when it was grabbed by 8 Rules abandoning his rake. “I got him! I got him!” he cried as he used all his might to try to pull the fiend out of the hole but he could not even budge him.

“Idiot,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “leave him inside. I know what to do. Don’t try to pull a snake backward like that!” 8 Rules indeed let go and the fiend slithered inside the hole. “Before I let go just now,” complained 8 Rules, “half of him was already ours. Now he has slithered inside. How could we make him come out again? Isn’t this what you call no more snake to play with?”

Pilgrim said, “This fellow has quite a hefty body. The hole is so small that he can never turn around inside. He has to move in a straightforward manner, and there has to be also a rear entrance. Go find it quickly and bar the hole. I’ll attack him from the front entrance here.” Idiot dashed past the mountain where he indeed discovered another hole. He paused but he had hardly stood still when Pilgrim at the front entrance sent a terrific jab with his rod into the hole. In great pain, the fiendish creature darted out of the rear entrance. Caught off guard, 8 Rules was struck down by his tail and, unable to get up again, he lay on the ground to nurse his pain. When Pilgrim saw that the hole was empty, he picked up his rod and ran over to the rear, shouting for 8 Rules to chase the fiend. On hearing Pilgrim’s voice, 8 Rules became so embarrassed that, regardless of his pain, he scrambled up and began to beat the ground madly with his rake. When he saw him, Pilgrim laughed and said, “The fiend’s gone! What are you doing that for?” 8 Rules said, “Old bull’s here ‘Beating the Bush to Stir the Snake.’”

“What a living Idiot!” said Pilgrim. “Let’s chase him!”

The two of them ran past a brook, when they found the fiend had coiled himself into a mound on the ground. Rearing his head, he opened wide his huge mouth and wanted to devour 8 Rules. Terrified, 8 Rules turned and fled but our Pilgrim went forward to meet him and was swallowed by the fiend in one gulp. Pounding his chest and stamping his feet, 8 Rules screamed, “Alas, Elder Brother! You’re dead!” Inside the stomach of the monster-spirit, Pilgrim held up his iron rod and said, “Don’t worry, 8 Rules. Let me ask him to build a bridge for you to see!”

He stuck his rod up a bit more and the fiendish creature had to raise his torso until he resembled a bow-shaped bridge. “He looks like a bridge, alright,” said 8 Rules, “but no one’d dare walk on it.”

“Let me ask him again to change into a boat for you to see,” said Pilgrim.

He plunged the iron rod downward; with the stomach hugging the ground and the head upraised, the fiendish creature looked like a sloop from the Kan River district. “He may look like a boat,” said 8 Rules, “but there’s no top mast for him to use the wind.”

“Get out of the way,” said Pilgrim, “and I’ll make him use the wind for you to see.” Using all his strength, Pilgrim pushed his iron rod upward from the spine of the fiendish creature until it reached a height of some seventy feet and the shape of a mast. In desperate pain and struggling for his life, the fiend shot forward, faster than any windblown vessel, and made for the road on which he came.

Some twenty miles down the mountain, he finally fell motionless to the dust and expired. 8 Rules caught up with him from behind and attacked him madly once more with his rake. Meanwhile, Pilgrim ripped a big hole in the creature’s body and crawled out, saying, “Idiot, he’s dead already. Why use your rake on him?”

“Oh, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “don’t you know that Old bull all his life has loved to strike at dead snakes?”

They thus put away their weapons and dragged the creature back by his tail. The Old Li in the Tuoluo Village and the rest of the people said to the Tang Monk, “Your two disciples haven’t returned for a whole night. They must’ve lost their lives.”

“I don’t think it’s that serious,” said Tripitaka. “Let us go out to have a look first.” Soon they caught sight of Pilgrim and 8 Rules approaching, dragging a huge python behind them and shouting to clear the way. Only then did the people become delighted; the old and young, the men and women of the entire village all came to respect and say, “Holy Dads, this is the very monster-spirit that has taken many lives here. We’re fortunate to have you exercise your power today and extirpate the fiendish deviate, for now our lives are secure.”

All the households were filled with gratitude, so much so that each one of them insisted on thanking the pilgrims with gifts and feasting. Master and disciples were detained for nearly a week, and only after much pleading on their part were they permitted to leave. When the people saw that the pilgrims refused to accept any kind of monetary rewards, they all prepared some dried goods and fruits. With laden horses and mules, coloured banners and red ribbons, they came to say farewell. There were only five hundred families in the region but those who came to send them off numbered more than seven hundred.

They journeyed amiably, and in a little while they arrived at the entrance of the PulpY Persimmon Alley in the Mountain of Seven Extremes. When Tripitaka smelled the wretched odour and saw how clogged the road was, he said, “Wukong, how could we pass through?” Clamping his hand over his nose, Pilgrim said, “This is rather difficult!” When Tripitaka heard him say “difficult,” tears dropped from his eyes. Old Li and others went forward and said, “Dad, please do not be anxious. When we accompanied you here, we’d already made up our minds. Since your noble disciples subdued the monster-spirit for us and delivered the entire village from such calamity, we’re all determined to open up a road for you to pass through.”

“Oldie,” said Pilgrim, smiling, “your words aren’t very reasonable! You told us earlier that the distance across this mountain is some eight hundred miles. You’re no celestial engineers under the command of the Great Yu, Conqueror of the Flood. How could you blast open mountains and build roads? If you want my master to get across the ridge, it’s up to us again to exert ourselves. None of you can do something like this.”

As he dismounted, Tripitaka said, “Wukong, how are you going to exert yourself?”

“If you want to cross this mountain in the twinkling of an eye,” said Pilgrim, smiling, “that’s difficult. If you want to build another road, that’s difficult, too. We’ve to push through, using the old alley but right now, I fear that no one will take care of our meals.”

“Don’t talk like that, Elder!” said Old Li. “No matter how long you four are delayed here, we can support you. How could you say that no one would take care of your meals!”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “go and prepare two piculs of dried rice, and make some steamed buns and breads also. Let that priest of ours with a long horn eat to his fill. He’ll then change into a huge bull to shovel out the old road. Our master will ride the horse and we’ll accompany him. We’ll get across.”

On hearing this, 8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, all of you want to be clean. How could you ask Old bull alone to become stinky?”

“Aware of Ability,” said Tripitaka, “if you truly have the ability to shovel out the alley and lead me across the mountain, I’ll have it recorded that you’re ranked first in merit on this occasion.” With a laugh, 8 Rules said, “Master, you and the rest of our venerable patrons here should not tease me. I, Old bull, after all, am capable of thirty-six kinds of transformation. If you want me to change into something delicate, elegant, and agile, I simply can’t do it. But if it’s a mountain, a tree, a boulder, an earth mound, a scabby elephant, a graded bull, a water buffalo, or a camel, I can change into all these things. The only thing is that if I change into something big, my appetite is going to be even bigger. I must be satisfactorily fed before I can work.”

“We’ve the stuff! We’ve the stuff!” cried the people. “We’ve all brought along dried goods, fruits, baked biscuits, and assorted pastries. We’re planning to present them to you after you had crossed the mountain. We’ll take them out now for you to enjoy. When you’ve assumed your transformation and begun your work, we’ll send people back to the village to prepare more rice for you.”

Filled with delight, 8 Rules took off his black cloth shirt and dropped his 9-pronged rake. “Don’t tease me!” he said to the people. “Watch Old bull achieve this stinky merit!” Dear Idiot! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he shook his body once and changed indeed into a huge bull. Truly he had a *long horn and short hair – all rather plump. He fed on herbs of the mountain since his youth. A black face with round eyes like the sun and moon; a round head with huge ears like plantain leaves. His bones were made lasting as Heaven’s age; tougher than iron was his thick skin refined. In deep nasal tones he made his moo-moo cry. What guttural grunts when he puffed and huffed! 4 white hoofs standing 1000 feet tall; sword-like bristles topped a hundred-yard frame. Mankind had long seen fatted cows and apes but never till today this Old bull elf. The Tang Monk and the people all gave praise; at such high magic power they were amazed.* When Pilgrim Sun saw this transformation of 8 Rules, he ordered those people who accompanied them to put their dried goods into a huge pile so that 8 Rules could enjoy the foodstuff. Without regard for whether it was cooked or raw, 8 Rules went forward and gulped down all of it. Then he proceeded to shovel out a path. Pilgrim asked Sand-monk to take off his shoes and to pole the luggage with care. He told his master to sit firmly on the carved saddle while he himself also took off his boots. Then he gave this instruction to the people: “If you’re grateful, go and prepare some rice quickly for my brother’s sustenance.”

Over half of those seven hundred people who accompanied the pilgrims to send them off came along with horses and mules; they, therefore, dashed back to the village like shooting stars to prepare the rice. The rest of the people, some three hundred of them, had come on foot, and these stood below the mountain and watched the pilgrims depart. The distance between the village and the mountain was some thirty miles. By the time the people went back to the village and returned with the rice, master and disciples were almost a hundred miles away. Not willing to let them go however, the people urged their horses and mules into the alley and spent the night travelling. Only by morning did they succeed in catching up with the pilgrims. “Holy Dads who are going to acquire scriptures,” they cried, “please slow down! Please slow down! We’re bringing you rice!”

On hearing these words, the elder was filled with gratitude. “Truly they’re kind and faithful people!” he said. Then he asked 8 Rules to stop so that he could take some rice for strength. Idiot had been shovelling for one whole day and night and he was beginning to feel keenly his hunger. Though there were more than 7 or 8 piculs of rice brought by those people, he gulped it all down, regardless of whether it was rice or other types of grain. After a hearty meal, he proceeded again to shovel out the road. Tripitaka, Pilgrim, and Sand-monk thanked the people and took leave of them. So it is that *the Tuoluo villagers return to their homes while 8 Rules opens up a mountain path. Divine might upholds devout Tripitaka; Wukong shows magic and the demon fails. An aeon’s Pulp Persimmons this day are cleansed; henceforth the Seven Extremes’ Alley is unclogged. 6 forms of desires having all been purged. In peace, unhindered, they will salute lotus seats.*

**084**  
**At Scarlet-Purple Kingdom the Tang Monk speaks of past eras; Pilgrim Sun performs on an arm broken in 3 places<sup>1</sup>**  
*Virtue attained, all causations dead, 1’s fame through 4 great continents will spread.*  
*Wise and enlightened you ascend yonder shore.*  
*The wind will sigh as hazy cirrus rises in the sky.*  
*Those Gods will all greet you; forever at Jade Terrace one will live thereto.*  
*Break up the human dream of butterfly.*  
*Let it all end! Where dust’s cleansed no worries attend.<sup>2</sup>*

Tripitaka and his disciples *having washed out an alley of sullage, now walked on the path of freedom.* Time went by swiftly and again it was torrid summer when *pomegranates spread ornate fruits, and lotus leaves split like green pans. In two rows of willow young swallows hide, to flee the heat the travellers wave their fans.* As they proceeded, they suddenly saw a moated city looming up. Reining in his horse, Tripitaka called out, “Disciples, take a look. What kind of a place is that?”

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “so you’re actually illiterate! How could you’ve accepted the decree of the Tang emperor to leave the court?”

“I became a priest when I was still a child,” replied Tripitaka. “I’ve mastered thousands of *Threads*. How could you say I’m illiterate?”

“If you’re literate,” said Pilgrim, “why couldn’t you recognise those three big words written plainly on the apricot-yellow banner? Why did you’ve to ask what sort of a place this is?”

“Brazen ape!” bellowed the Tang Monk. “You’re babbling! That banner’s whipped by the wind. There might be words on it but I can’t see them clearly!”

“Of all persons,” said Pilgrim, “why is it that old monkey’s able to see them?”

“Master,” both 8 Rules and Sand-monk said, “don’t listen to Elder Brother’s jabbering! From this distance, we can hardly see the moated city clearly. Who could see any words?”

“Aren’t those words, the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom?” asked Pilgrim.

Tripitaka said, “The Scarlet-Purple Kingdom must be a state in the Western domain. That means we must’ve our rescript certified.”

“That goes without saying,” said Pilgrim.

In a little while, they arrived before the gate of the city where Tripitaka dismounted. As they strolled through the triple-layered gates, they found that it was a marvellous national capital indeed. What they saw were *soaring towered gates, orderly parapets. Around the city running water flowed freely; north and south, it fronted on tall mountains. Cargoes heaped up in its streets and markets; business flourished in every house and home. Truly it was a meeting place of royalty, a great capital, a Heavenly residence. Towered boats came from distant shores. Laden with foreign jades and gems. Its noble form joined distant hills; palaces reached the clear void. Its 3 passes firmly secured, therein peace forever prospered.* As master and disciples walked through the main boulevards, they found the looks of the people distinguished and imposing, their attire orderly, neat, language clear, and resonant. Truly it was no different from the world of the Great Tang. Now, when those people on both sides busily engaged in buying and selling suddenly discovered the ugly visage of 8 Rules, the dark face and tall frame of Sand-monk, and the hairy features of Pilgrim Sun, they all abandoned their businesses and crowded around the pilgrims to stare at them Tripitaka felt compelled to call out, “Start no trouble! Lower your heads and walk on!” Obeying his master 8 Rules stuffed his lotus root-like mouth inside his bosom, and Sand-monk dared not raise his head. Only Pilgrim kept staring left and right as he walked closely beside the Tang Monk. After they had looked at the pilgrims for a while, those people who were more sensible went back to their own activities. The loiterers and the mischievous youths however, all surged around 8 Rules; laughing and clamouring, they threw tiles and bricks at 8 Rules to tease him. The Tang Monk became so nervous that he was perspiring. All he could say was, “Start nothing!” Idiot dared not lift his head. In a moment, they turned the corner and came upon a large residence surrounded by an outer wall. On top of its entrance were the words, College of Interpreters.<sup>3</sup> “Disciples,” said the Tang Monk, “let’s go inside this official mansion.”

“What for?” asked Pilgrim.

“The College of Interpreters,” said the Tang Monk, “is a meeting place for people from all parts of the world. Even we can make use of it. Let’s go in and rest ourselves. After I’ve seen the throne and had saw our rescript certified, we can then leave the city and be on our way once more.”

On hearing this, 8 Rules brought out his horn and frightened off several scores of those people following them. “What Master says is quite right,” he said as he walked forward. “Let’s hide inside so that we’ll not be bothered by the cackling of these bird-brains!”

They thus entered the college, and the people gradually dispersed. There were 2 officials inside the college, a minister proper and a vice-minister. They were both taking the roll in the great hall and preparing to meet other officials arriving. Startled by the sight of the Tang Monk walking in, they both said, “Who are you? Who are you? Where do you think you’re going?”

Folding his hands before his chest, Tripitaka said, “This humble cleric has been sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. We came upon your treasure region, and we dared not pass through without permission. We’d like to have our travel rescript certified, and we’d like to ask for temporary lodging in your noble mansion.” When those two college ministers heard what he said, they asked their attendants on both sides to step back. Fixing up their caps and tightening their belts, the ministers left the main hall to greet the Tang Monk. At once they asked that guest rooms be cleaned out for the pilgrims to rest, and they also ordered the preparation of vegetarian meals. After Tripitaka thanked them, the two officials departed with their staff, leaving only a few attendants to look after the priest. As Tripitaka began to walk out, Pilgrim said spitefully, “These rogues! Why didn’t they allow old monkey to stay in the main suite?”

The Tang Monk said, “Their territory here is not governed by our Great Tang, nor do we’ve any formal diplomatic relations. Moreover, the college is frequently visited by distinguished guests or high rank officials. That’s probably why they find it difficult to entertain us here.”

“If you put it that way,” said Pilgrim, “I’d want them all the more to entertain us here.”

As they were speaking, a steward came in with some supplies: a large bowl of white rice, a large bowl of wheat flour, two bunches of green vegetables, four cakes of bean curd, two fried wheat gluten, one dish of dried bamboo shoots, and one dish of wood-ears. Tripitaka told his disciples to accept these and thanked the steward. The steward said, “In the west rooms there are clean pots and pans. The fires and stoves are ready. Please go there and cook the meal yourselves.”

“Let me ask you this,” said Tripitaka. “Is the king still in the main hall?”

“His Majesty has not held court for a long time,” replied the steward. “Today happens to be an auspicious day, and at this very moment he is discussing with many civil and military officials the publication of a special proclamation. If you want to have your travel rescript certified, you’d hurry there for you may still catch him. By tomorrow, you’ll be unable to have an audience with him, and I don’t know how long you’ll have to wait for another opportunity.”

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “all of you stay here and prepare our meal. Let me hurry there to have our rescript certified. I’ll then come back, eat, and we’ll leave.” Quickly 8 Rules took out the cassock and the travel rescript: after Tripitaka put on the proper attire, he told his disciples not to leave the college and cause trouble outside before he went into court.

In a moment, he arrived before the Five Phoenix Tower, and we can’t begin to tell you how magnificent were those palatial halls and buildings. He went before the front gate proper and requested the imperial messenger to make known to the Heavenly Court his desire to have the rescript certified. The Custodian of the Yellow Gate indeed went before the white jade steps to memorialise: “Outside the gate of the court, there’s a priest from the Great Tang in the Land of the East who’s journeying to the Thunderclap Monastery in the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God by imperial commission. Desirous of having his travel rescript certified, he awaits our royal summons.”

On hearing this, the king said in delight, “We’ve been ill for a long time and we’ve not ascended our throne. What a happy coincidence this is that the moment we appear in the main hall with the intent to find a good physician through the promulgation of a special proclamation, a noble priest immediately appears.” He at once had the priest summoned to the hall where Tripitaka saluted himself to pay the king homage. The king then asked him to take a seat in the golden hall, after which the Court of Imperial Entertainments was asked to prepare a vegetarian banquet. Having thanked the king for his royal favours, Tripitaka presented the travel rescript. After he read the document, the king was very pleased. “Master of the Law,” he said, “through how many successions of rulers and how many generations of ministers has your Great Tang passed? As for the Tang emperor, how did he return to life from his illness so that he could ask you to traverse mountains and rivers to seek scriptures?” Faced with these questions, the elder saluted with hands folded to make his reply saying, “In the native land of your humble cleric, *three August ones ruled our world; five Thearchs set relations. Yao and Shun defined kingship; Yu and Tang gave the people peace. But descendants of Cheng and Zhou all desired independence. Using might to oppress the weak, they laid claim to sundry kingdoms. They totalled eighteen rulers, dividing land and borders. They decreased to twelve later, and the world became tranquil. For want of chariots and horses, they again devoured each other. Seven powers strove together and six states all saluted to Qin. But Heaven gave birth to Pei of Lu, each envious of the other. The empire then became Han’s that fixed laws for all to obey. Then Han succumbed to Sima’ and Jin became unruly, too. North and South twelve states in all – such as Song, Qi, Liang, and Chen – lasted in close succession till Great Sui became the true heir. Then came a lecher and despot who made the people suffer. Our king with Li as his surname took Tang as his empire’s title. After emperor Gaozu departed, Shimin became our present ruler. Our rivers are clean, seas tranquil for great’s his kindness and virtue. Now north of the capital Chang’an lived a water sprite, a dragon god who reduced some sweet rain and thus deserved to perish. Through a dream at night however, he begged our king for assistance. The king promised him pardon and summoned a worthy subject who’s kept within the palace to play chess slowly with the king. When the time reached the noon hour, that worthy subject slew the dragon in a dream.*”

On hearing what Tripitaka said, the king suddenly groaned a few times and said, “Master of the Law, from which country did that subject come?”

“He was the prime minister before the throne of our emperor,” replied Tripitaka. “His surname is Wei and his given name is Zheng. He knows astronomy and geography, and he can distinguish between yin and yang. He is truly a great minister and helper, one who knows how to secure the empire and establish the state. Because he executed the Dragon King of the Jing River in his dream, the dragon king filed suit in the region of darkness, accusing our emperor of renegeing on his promise to spare his life. That was why our emperor became mortally ill. Then Wei Zheng wrote a letter for our emperor to take to the region of darkness and give to Cui Jue, a judge in the Capital of Death. When the Tang emperor indeed expired after a little while, he came back to life three days later all because of Wei Zheng who moved Judge Cui to alter a document and add twenty more years to the emperor’s age. Thereafter when the emperor gave a Grand Mass of Land and Water, he commissioned this humble cleric to traverse a great distance through many nations in order that I may seek from the Religious Patriarch the three baskets of Mahayana scriptures that will help redeem the cursed and wretched souls to Heaven.”

Groaning some more, the king sighed, “Truly yours is a nation and a Heavenly Court! Your ruler is righteous, and your ministers are upright! Look at us! We’ve been ill for a long time but not one minister is able to assist us.” When he heard this, the elder stole a glance at the king and saw that his face looked yellow and his body seemed emaciated. His whole appearance in fact was weary and spiritless. The elder was about to question him further when the official from the Court of Imperial Entertainments approached to invite the Tang Monk to dine. The king at once gave this command: “Set out our meal at the Hall of Unfurling Fragrance. We’ll dine with the Master of the Law.”

Tripitaka thanked him. Pilgrim in the College of Interpreters asked Sand-monk to make tea and rice and to prepare some vegetarian dishes. Sand-monk said, “It’s easy to make the tea and the rice but it’ll not be easy to prepare the vegetarian dishes.”

“Why?” asked Pilgrim.

“Oil, salt, soy sauce, and vinegar,” replied Sand-monk, “none of these can be found here.”

Pilgrim said, “I’ve a few pennies of small change. Tell 8 Rules to go buy some on the streets.”

At once turning lazy, Idiot said, “I dare not go. My features aren’t that nice looking, and I fear that Master will blame me if I cause any trouble.”

“We’re doing business fair and square!” said Pilgrim. “We’re not begging, and we’re not robbing. How could you cause any trouble?”

“Haven’t you seen what I’d do just now?” said 8 Rules. “I yanked out my horn before the door and scared off over ten persons. If I go to the bustling market, I don’t know how many persons will be frightened to death.”

“All you know is the bustling market,” said Pilgrim, “but have you seen what they are selling in this market?”

“Master told me to walk with my head saluted,” replied 8 Rules, “to cause no trouble. In truth I’ve seen nothing.”

Pilgrim said, “There are juice shops, rice dealers, mills, and fabric stores that we need not mention in detail. There are truly fine teahouses, noodle shops, huge biscuits, and gigantic buns. Moreover, the restaurants display nice soups and rice, fine spices, and excellent vegetables. I saw also exotic puddings, steamed goods, pastries, rolls, fried goods, and honey cakes – in fact, countless goodies. I’ll go buy some of these to treat you. How’s that?”

When Idiot heard this, saliva drooled from his mouth and his throat gurgled as he swallowed hard a few times. “Elder Brother,” he said, leaping up. “I’ll let you treat me this time. I’ll save some money so that next time I can return your favour.” Smiling to himself, Pilgrim said, “Sand-monk, be careful in cooking the rice. We’ll go and buy some seasoning.” Knowing that he was making fun of Idiot, Sand-monk played along and replied, “Go ahead, both of you. After you’ve fed yourself, bring back a lot of seasoning.”

Picking up a container, Idiot followed Pilgrim out the door. Two officials asked, “Where are the elders going?”

“To buy seasoning,” replied Pilgrim. “Go west on this street,” said one of them, “and make a turn at the corner watchtower. You’ll find the Zheng family grocery where you can buy however much you like. Oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, ginger, pepper, and tea – they have them all.”

The two of them, arm in arm, followed the street to the west. Pilgrim walked right past several teahouses and restaurants, refusing to buy what ought to be bought, to eat what ought to be eaten. “Elder Brother,” 8 Rules called out, “let’s not be so choosy. Just buy something here and we’ll enjoy it.” Pilgrim who had wanted to sport with him, refused, of course, to buy anything. “Worthy Brother,” he said, “don’t be such a spendthrift! Let’s walk a bit further, and we’ll buy something big to eat.” As the two of them chatted, they again caused many people to follow them, staring. In a little while, they reached the watchtower, beneath which they found a large, noisy crowd blocking the street. On seeing them, 8 Rules said, “Elder Brother, I’m not going over there. Look at the mob. I fear that they may want to arrest monks, especially those who are strangers. If they seize me, what’ll happen to me?”

“Nonsense!” said Pilgrim. “Monks haven’t broken the law. Why should they want to arrest us? Let’s walk past them so that we can buy some seasoning from the Zheng family store.”

“All right! All right! All right!” said 8 Rules. “I’ll not cause any trouble. I’ll just squeeze into the crowd, flap my ears a couple of times, and frighten them into falling down. Let a few of them fall to their deaths, and I’ll just play with my life!”

“If you put it that way,” said Pilgrim, “why don’t you stand still here at the base of the wall. Let me go to the store and get the seasoning. Then I’ll buy some vegetarian noodles and biscuits for you to eat.” Handing the container over to Pilgrim, Idiot faced the wall, stuck his horn against it, and stood absolutely still.

Pilgrim walked up to the tower, and it was crowded indeed. As he pushed his way through the throng, he learned that a special royal proclamation had been mounted beneath the tower, and that was why so many people fought to look at it. When he finally squeezed through to where the document was, Pilgrim opened wide his fiery eyes and diamond pupils to stare at it, and this was what he read: Since we, the king of the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom in the West Aparagodāṇīya Continent, assumed our throne, the four quarters have remained submissive and the populace have enjoyed leisure and peace. Recently however, the affairs of state have turned inauspicious, for we’ve been gravely ill, and recovery has been most difficult even after a long time. The college of imperial medicine of our nation has administered repeatedly its excellent prescriptions but these have not given us cure. Therefore, we publish now this proclamation for all the worthy scholars throughout the world, regardless of whether they are going to the North, coming from the East, or are even natives of China, the foreign state. If there is anyone skilful in medicine and therapeutic arts, let him ascend the treasure hall and restore our health. We most solemnly pledge that the moment we’re healed, we’ll divide the kingdom with him. For this reason we’ve mounted this necessary proclamation.

When he finished reading it, Pilgrim was filled with delight, saying to himself, “The ancients said, ‘Moving about may bring us riches!’ We certainly shouldn’t have sat idly in the college, nor is there any need now to buy seasoning. Let’s delay for one day this business of fetching scriptures and allow old monkey to play physician for a bit.”

Dear Great Sage! He stooped low and left the container on the ground; picking up a pinch of dirt, he flung it up into the air and recited a spell. Immediately, the Magic of Body-Concealment rendered him invisible, so that he could walk up to the proclamation and gently peel it off. Then he faced the ground toward the southwest and sucked in a deep breath before blowing the air out again. At once a strong whirlwind arose and scattered the multitude. He turned around and went back to where 8 Rules was standing. There he found 8 Rules leaning on the base of the wall with the support of his horn and appearing as if he had fallen asleep. Without disturbing him, Pilgrim folded up the proclamation and gently stuck it in 8 Rules’ bosom. In big strides he then went back first to the College of Interpreters. Those people beneath the watchtower when the wind arose, all of them covered their heads and shut their eyes. Little did they anticipate that after the wind had passed, the royal proclamation would be nowhere to be seen, and each one of them was terrified. Originally the proclamation was accompanied by twelve eunuchs and twelve palace guards as it left the court that morning. It had not been hung up for more than three hours when it was blown away by the wind. Trembling all over, those eunuchs and guards searched for it left and right, and that was when they suddenly caught sight of a slip of paper sticking out from the bosom of Bullseye 8 Rules. “Did you peel off the proclamation?” shouted the officials as they ran up to him.

All at once that Idiot raised his head and stuck out his horn, so frightening those several palace guards that they stumbled backwards and fell down. He turned around and wanted to flee but he was pulled back by several of the braver ones. “You took down the royal proclamation for the recruitment of physicians,” they cried. “Where do you think you’re going if you’re not going into court to heal His Majesty?”

More and more flustered, Idiot said, “Your son is the one who peeled off the royal proclamation! Your grandson is the one who knows anything about healing!” One of the palace guards spoke up: “What’s that you’ve in your bosom?” Only then did Idiot lower his head and find that there was indeed a piece of paper there. When he spread it open and took one look, he clenched his teeth and cried, “That wretched ape has killed me!” He became so furious that he would have ripped up the document if the people had not stopped him.

“You’re dead!” they shouted. “This is a proclamation of our reigning monarch. Who dares to tear it up? If you’ve taken it down and stuffed it into your bosom, you must be a physician able to heal him. Go with us, quickly!”

“You’ve no idea,” shouted 8 Rules, “that I didn’t take down this proclamation. It was taken down by my elder brother, Sun Wukong. After he stuck it secretly in my bosom, he abandoned me and left. If you want to get to the bottom of this matter, I’ve to go find him for you.”

“What sort of wild talk is that?” said the people. “You think ‘We’d forsake a ready-made bell to strike one about to be forged’? You took down the proclamation! And you tell us now to find someone else! Never mind you! We’ll haul you back to see our lord!”

Without further investigation of the matter, that group of people began to push and shove Idiot. Idiot however, stood perfectly still, and he seemed to have taken root in the earth. Not even a dozen people could budge him. “All of you don’t know any better!” said 8 Rules. “If you pull at me some more, you’ll pull out my idiotic ire! Don’t blame me then!”

Soon the entire neighbourhood was aroused by all that hubbub to come and have 8 Rules surrounded. Among the people were two elderly eunuchs who said to him, “Your looks are strange and your voice sounds unfamiliar. Where have you come from, and why are you so headstrong?”

“We’re those from the Land of the East sent to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven,” replied 8 Rules. “My master’s a Master of the Law and the bond-brother of the Tang emperor. Just now he has gone into court to have his travel rescript certified. My elder brother and I came here to buy seasoning. When I saw the crowd beneath the watchtower, I dared not go forward, and my elder brother told me to wait for him here. When he saw the proclamation, he called up a whirlwind and had it taken off and stuck secretly in my bosom. Then he left me.”

“Just now,” said one of the eunuchs, “I saw a stout-ish priest with a white face heading straight for the gate of the court. I suppose he must be your master.”

“He’s indeed,” said 8 Rules.

“Where has your elder brother gone to?” asked the eunuch.

8 Rules said, “There’s altogether four of us. Our master’s gone to have our travel rescript certified but the rest of us – three disciples, a horse, and our luggage – are all resting at the College of Interpreters. After my elder brother had played this trick on me, he must have returned to the college.”

“Palace guards,” said the eunuch, “stop tugging at this man. Let us go with him to the college, and we’ll know the whole truth of the matter.”

"These two mammas are far more sensible!" said 8 Rules.

"This priest is truly uninformed!" said one of the palace guards. "How could you address the papas as mammas?"

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" said 8 Rules, laughing. "*You're* the one who's switching the genders! These two old mammas should be addressed as *popos* or madams. And you want to call them papas?"

"Stop your saucy tongue!" the people said. "Go find your elder brother quickly."

By that time the noisy crowd had grown to over five hundred people, all surging up to the entrance of the college. "Stop here, all of you," said 8 Rules. "My elder brother is not like me who allows you this spoofing. He is rather hot-tempered, and terribly serious. When you meet him, you must extend to him a grand salutation and address him as Venerable Dad Sun. Then he'll do business with you. Otherwise, he may change his colours and you'll not succeed with your enterprise."

"If your elder brother truly has the ability to heal our king," said the eunuchs and the palace guards, "he will inherit half the kingdom. He certainly deserves our salute."

While the idlers milled about noisily before the college, 8 Rules led the troop of eunuchs and palace guards inside where they heard Pilgrim laughing and telling Sand-monk the trick he had played on 8 Rules. 8 Rules dashed forward and grabbed him, screaming, "Some person you're! You tricked me out there and promised to buy vegetarian noodles, biscuits, and buns for me to eat. They're all fibs! Then you brought on the whirlwind and took down this so-called royal proclamation to have it stuck secretly in my bosom. You're playing me for a fatso! Is that how you treat your brother?"

Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Idiot, you must have taken the wrong road and gone off to someplace else! I passed the watchtower, bought the seasoning, and came back quickly to where you're but I'd not find you. So, I returned here first. Where did I peel off any royal proclamation?"

"The officials guarding the proclamation are right here," said 8 Rules. Hardly had he finished speaking when those several eunuchs and palace guards went forward to salute Pilgrim long. "Venerable Dad Sun," they said, "today our king must be exceedingly fortunate, for Heaven has sent you to descend to us. We beseech you to exercise your great talents in healing and your profound knowledge in therapeutic arts. If you succeed in curing our king, you'll have claim to half the kingdom."

On hearing these words, Pilgrim became more sober. He took the proclamation and asked the people, "Are you the officials guarding the proclamation?" Respecting, the eunuchs said, "Your slaves are palace officials belonging to the Directorate of Ceremonials. These are the Embroidered-Uniform Guards."

"This proclamation for recruitment of physicians," said Pilgrim, "was indeed taken down by me. I purposely arranged for my brother to lead you to see me. Your lord's indisposed but as the proverb says, *medicines aren't lightly bought; a doctor isn't casually sought*. You go back and ask the king to come here in person to invite me. I guarantee that when I stretch forth my hand, his illness will at once disappear."

When they heard these words, all of the eunuchs were astonished. "A stupendous claim like this can be made only by someone in the know," said one of the palace guards. "Half of us will remain here to continue our silent entreaty. Half of us will return to memorialise to the throne." Whereupon four eunuchs and six palace guards without waiting for any summons, went inside the court and memorialised before the steps, saying, "My lord, ten thousand happiness have come upon you!" Having finished his meal, the king was just having a quiet chat with Tripitaka. When he heard this, he asked, "Where has this happiness come from?" One of the eunuchs said, "This morning your slaves took the royal proclamation for the recruitment of physicians to have it mounted beneath the watchtower. It was taken down by Elder Sun, a sage monk sent from the distant Land of the East to acquire scriptures. He is now residing in the College of Interpreters and desires the personal appearance of the king to invite him. He has promised us that when he stretches forth his hand, the illness will disappear. That is why we've come to memorialise to you."

On hearing this, the king was filled with delight. He turned to ask the Tang Monk, "Master of the Law, how many noble disciples do you've?"

"This humble cleric," replied Tripitaka with hands folded before him, "has three mischievous disciples."

"Which of them is conversant with therapeutic arts?" asked the king.

"To tell you the truth, Your Majesty," said Tripitaka, "my mischievous disciples are all ordinary men of the wilds. Their knowledge is confined to pulling the horse and toting the luggage, to fording streams and leading your poor monk across the mountains. When we pass through the more dangerous regions, they may even be able to subjugate demons and fiends, to tame tigers and dragons. But that's all! None of them knows anything about the nature of medicine."

"Why must you be so modest, Master of the Law?" said the king. "It is truly a Heavenly affinity that you'd arrive on this very day when we ascend the main hall. If your noble disciple were not an able physician, how would he be willing to take down our proclamation and demand our going there in person to invite him? He must have the ability to heal the highest ruler of the state." Then the king gave this order: "Let our civil and military subjects represent us, for our body is weakened and our strength depleted, and we dare not ride the imperial chariot. You must therefore proceed beyond the court to extend our most earnest invitation to Elder Sun to come and examine our illness. When you see him, you must be careful not to treat him discourteously. You must address him as Elder Sun, the divine monk, and you must greet him as if he were your ruler."

Having received this decree, the various officials went with the eunuchs and the palace guards to the College of Interpreters. Standing in rows according to their ranks, they paid homage to Pilgrim. 8 Rules was so taken aback that he dashed inside a side room while Sand-monk ran out to stand beneath the wall. Look at Great Sage! He sat firmly in the middle of the room and remained unmoved.

"This wretched ape's," grumbled 8 Rules to himself, "hanging himself alive with all these undeserved honours! How'd he not return the salute of these many officials? Why, he'll not even stand up!"

Soon the ceremony was over, and the officials separated into two files before they presented this memorial, saying, "Let us inform Elder Sun, the divine monk, that we're the subjects of the king of the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom. By royal decree, we come to honour the divine monk with due reverence and ceremony. We beseech you to enter the court and examine a patient." Only then did Pilgrim stand up and say to them, "Why didn't your king come here?"

"Because his body is weakened and his strength depleted," replied the officials, "our king dares not ride the chariot. He has commanded us subjects to observe this ceremony on his behalf and invite you, the divine monk."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "please lead the way, all of you, and I'll follow."

The various officials departed in groups, in accordance with their ranks while Pilgrim walked behind them after having tidied his clothes. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "don't you put us up to anything now!"

"I'll not," said Pilgrim, "but I want you two to accept the medicines for me."

"What medicines?" asked Sand-monk.

"There will be some medicines sent to us," said Pilgrim. "Accept them in the quantities that they are delivered. I'll make use of them when I return."

The two of them agreed, and we'll leave them for the moment. Our Pilgrim soon arrived at court with the many officials who walked ahead to report to the king. As the pearly screen was rolled up, the king opened his phoenix eyes and dragon pupils to look at his visitor and his golden mouth to say, "Who is the divine monk, Elder Sun?" Taking a big step forward, Pilgrim said in a loud voice, "Old monkey's the one!" When the king heard this savage voice and encountered the bizarre countenance, he shook so violently that he fell back onto the dragon couch. Those harem girls and palace attendants hurriedly had him borne inside the palace, and all the king could say was, "We're scared to death!" All the officials began to chide Pilgrim, saying, "How could this monk be so rude and impetuous? How could you be so audacious as to take down the proclamation?"

Hearing these words, Pilgrim smiled and said, "All of you've wrongly taken umbrage at me! If that's how you treat people, the illness of your king won't be cured for another millennium!"

"How long can a man live," asked the officials, "that he should be ill for a millennium?"

Pilgrim said, "That man at the moment is a sick ruler. After he dies, he'll be a sick ghost. Even in the next disciple, he'll still be a sick man. Isn't it true then that he'll not be cured for a millennium?"

Growing angry, the officials said, "Monk, you've absolutely no manners! How dare you mouth such nonsense?"

"That's no nonsense!" replied Pilgrim with a laugh. "Listen to what I've to say: *most mysterious is the physician's art; his mind must ever be alert and keen. To look, listen, ask, and take – these four things – if one's missing, his craft's incomplete. One, we look at the patient's complexion: Is it moist, dry, fat, or thin in waking or sleep? Two, we listen for clear or turbid voice when he speaks lucid or frenetic words. Three, we ask for the ailment's cause and length. For how he eats, drinks, and eliminates. Four, we scan the conduits<sup>8</sup> by taking the pulse to learn how submerged or floating in and out.*

<sup>10</sup>*If we don't look, listen, ask, and take, in this life his ailment will never forsake him!*"

Amid those two rows of military and civil officials standing in attendance, there was the royal physician who, when he heard these words, spoke up with great approbation. "What this monk says," he said, "is most reasonable. Even a mortal examining a patient must look, listen, ask, and take – these very activities accord well with the efficacy of gods and sages." Persuaded by this statement, the officials asked a palace attendant to send in the message: "The elder would like to exercise the principles of looking, listening, asking, and taking, before he could diagnose the illness and prescribe the medicine."

Lying on his dragon bed, the king gasped out his answer: "Tell him to go away! We can't bear to see an unfamiliar face!" The attendant walked out of the palace and said, "Monk, our king decrees you to leave, for he can't bear to see an unfamiliar face."

"If he can't do so," replied Pilgrim, "I know that art of 'Dangling a Thread to take the Pulse.'"

The various officials were secretly pleased, saying to themselves, "We've heard of this rare technique but we've never seen it." They said to the attendant, "Go and memorialise once more." Again the attendant went inside the palace to say, "My lord, if that elder isn't permitted to see your face, he can dangle a thread to take the pulse."

The king thought to himself, *We've been sick for three years but we've never tried this*. He therefore gave the reply, "Summon him in."

Immediately the attendant transmitted the message: "Our lord's given him the permission to take the pulse by dangling a thread. Summon Elder Sun quickly into the palace."

Pilgrim at once started to ascend the treasure hall, only to be met by the scolding of Tang Monk. "Wretched ape!" he cried. "You've injured me!" Smiling, Pilgrim said, "Dear Master, I've put you in the limelight! How could you say that I've injured you?"

"Which person did you manage to cure," shouted Tripitaka, "during these few years you've been following me? You don't even know the nature of medicines, nor have you read any medical texts. How could you be so audacious as to rush into this big calamity?" Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Master, you didn't know about this. I know a few herbal prescriptions which can cure even grave illnesses. All they care is that I heal him. But even if I kill him, all I'll be guilty of is merely manslaughter because of medical incompetence. I'll not be executed. Why are you so worried? Relax! Relax! Take a seat and see if I'm any good at taking the pulse."

The elder again said, "Have you ever seen what sort of sentences there are in the *Candid Questions*, *The Classic of Medical Problems*, the pharmacopoeias, and the *Formulas of the Pulse*?"<sup>11</sup> Do you know their proper gloss and exegesis? How could you babble like this about some dangling the thread to take the pulse?"

Laughing, Pilgrim said, "I carry with me some threads of gold that you've never seen." He reached back with his hand and pulled off 3 strands of hair from his tail. Giving them a pinch, he cried, "Change!" They changed at once into 3 threads, each 24 feet long and thus corresponding to the 24 Solar Terms. Holding them in his hands, he said to the Tang Monk, "Aren't these my golden threads?"

The attending eunuch spoke up from the side, "Let the elders refrain from further conversation. Please enter the palace to examine the patient." Taking leave of the Tang Monk, Pilgrim followed the attendant to walk inside the palace. Truly it was that *the mind's secret prescription can heal a state; its wondrous formula will assure long life*. He went inside.

**085**

**At night the Lord of the Mind refines medicines; at a banquet the king speaks of the perverse fiend**

The Great Sage Sun went with the palace attendant to the interior division of the royal palace. He stood still only after he had reached the door of the royal bedchamber. Then he told the attendant to take the three golden threads inside along with the instruction: "Ask one of the palace ladies or eunuchs to tie these three threads to the inch,<sup>1</sup> the pass, and the foot sections of His Majesty's left hand where the radial pulse are felt. Then pass the other ends of the threads out to me through the window shutters."

The attendant followed his instruction. The king was asked to sit up on the dragon bed while the three sections of his pulse were tied by the golden threads, and their other ends were then passed out to Pilgrim. Using the thumb and the index finger of his right hand to pick up one of the threads, Pilgrim first examined the pulse of the inch section; next, he used his middle finger and his thumb to pick up the second thread and examine the pulse of the pass section; finally, he used the thumb and his fourth finger to pick up the third thread and examine the pulse of the foot section. Thereafter Pilgrim made his own breathing regular<sup>2</sup> and proceeded to determine which of the 4 Heteropathic Pneumatics,<sup>3</sup> the 5 Stases,<sup>4</sup> the 7 External Images<sup>5</sup> of the Pulse, the 8 Internal Images of the Pulse, and the 9 Pulse Indications<sup>6</sup> were present. His pressure on the threads went from light to medium to heavy, and from heavy to medium to light,<sup>7</sup> until he could clearly perceive whether the condition of the patient was repletion or depletion of energy and its cause. Then he made the request that the threads be untied from the king's left wrist and be attached as before to the positions on his right wrist. Using now the fingers on his left hand, he then examined the pulse on the right wrist section by section. When he had completed his examination, he shook his body once and retrieved his hairs. "Your Majesty," he cried in a loud voice, "on your left wrist the pulse of your inch section feels strong and tense, the pulse of your pass section feels rough and languid, and the pulse of your foot section feels hollow and sunken. On your right wrist the pulse of your inch section feels floating and smooth, the pulse of your pass section feels retarded and hesitant, and the pulse of your foot section feels accelerated

and firm. Now, when the pulse of your left inch section feels strong and tense, it indicates an internal energetic depletion with pain in the cardiac system of functions. When the pulse of your left pass section feels rough and languid, it indicates sweating that has led to numbness in the flesh. When the pulse of your left foot section feels hollow and sunken, it indicates a pink tinge to your urine and blood in your stool. When the pulse of the inch section on your right wrist feels floating and smooth, it indicates a congestion blocking the pneumatic energy circulation and leading to cessation of menses.<sup>8</sup> When the pulse of your right pass section feels retarded and hesitant, it indicates a stasis of alimentary matter in the stomach system with retention of fluids. When the pulse of your right foot section feels accelerated and firm, it indicates discomfort caused by sensations of stuffiness and chills caused by energetic depletion. To sum up, your illness has been caused by fear and anxiety, and it may be the manifestation type of an illness called the 'Paired Birds in Severance.'

On hearing these words, the king was so delighted that he roused himself to answer loudly: "Your fingers have brought out the truth! Your fingers have brought out the truth! This is indeed our illness. Please go outside and prescribe us some medicines."

Only then did the Great Sage walk slowly out of the palace while the eunuchs who saw everything clearly from the side had already reported the result to the rest of the people. In a moment, Pilgrim walked out and he was questioned by the Tang Monk. "I've examined the pulse," said Pilgrim, "and now I've to prescribe some medicines for the illness." Approaching him, the officials said, "Just now the divine monk said that this might be the manifestation type of an illness called the 'Paired Birds in Severance.' What does that mean?"

Smiling, Pilgrim said, "There are two birds flying together, one male and one female. Suddenly they are separated by violent wind and rain, so that the female cannot see the male, nor can the male see the female. The female longs for the male and the male longs for the female. Is this not the 'Paired Birds in Severance'?"

On hearing this, all the officials cried in unison, "Bravo! Truly a divine monk! Truly a divine physician!"

Then the imperial physician said, "You've already diagnosed the illness. What medicines would you use to cure it?"

"No need to write a prescription," said Pilgrim. "I'll take all the medicines you can give me."

"But according to a classic," said the physician, "There are eight hundred and eight flavours of medicine, and a human may have four hundred and four kinds of illness.' All of those illnesses cannot be found in a single person. How could all the medicines be used? Why do you want everything?"

Pilgrim replied, "The ancients said, 'Medicines are not confined to prescriptions; they are to be used as one sees fit.' That is why I must have all the medicines so that I can add or subtract as I see fit." Not daring to argue any further, the physician went out of the gate of the court and sent those on duty in his bureau to go to all the pharmaceutical stores of the city and purchase three pounds of each kind of medicine, both raw and cooked, for Pilgrim to use. Pilgrim said, "This is not the place to prepare the proper drug. Take the medicines and the necessary drug-making utensils and send them all to the College of Interpreters. Let my brothers receive them for me."

The physician obeyed. 3 pounds each of the 808 flavours of medicine, along with grinders, rollers, drug mortars, pestles, and the like were sent to the college where they were received item by item. Pilgrim went back up the hall to ask his master to go with him to the college so that they might prepare the drug. As the elder rose from his seat, a decree was issued from the internal palace, requesting that the Master of the Law remain behind to spend the night at the Wenhua Palace Hall.<sup>9</sup> After the king had taken the drug in the morning and had been restored to health, all of them would be rewarded and the rescript would be certified to permit their departure. Greatly alarmed, Tripitaka said, "O disciple! This means that he wants me kept here as security. If he is cured, he'll send us off with delight. If he is not, my life will be finished. You'd better take extra caution and prepare a specially effective drug!"

"No need to worry, Master," said Pilgrim, smiling. "Enjoy yourself here. Old monkey has the ability to bring healing to the state."

Dear Great Sage! He took leave of Tripitaka and the various officials and went straight to the college. When 8 Rules met him, he smiled and said, "Elder Brother, now I know you!"

"What do you know about me?" asked Pilgrim.

"You must have realised," said 8 Rules, "that this scripture-seeking enterprise will not succeed but you don't have any capital to start a business. When you see today how prosperous this region is, you're drawing up plans to open a pharmacy."

"Stop babbling!" snapped Pilgrim. "When we've cured the king, we'll be content to leave the court and journey once more. What are you talking about, opening up a pharmacy?"

"If you're not," said 8 Rules, "what do you want to do with all these medicines? There are eight hundred and eight different kinds, and you ordered three pounds for each variety. Altogether, there are two thousand four hundred and twenty-four pounds. How many pounds can you use just to cure one person? I wonder how many years it'll take him to finish your prescription?"

"You think I really need that much?" said Pilgrim. "But those imperial physicians are all stupid and blind. I asked for such a huge amount of medicines only to prevent them from ever guessing what are the exact flavours I've used. It'll be difficult for them to learn my ingenious prescription."

As they were speaking, the two college officials came in, knelt before them, and said, "We invite the Holy Dads, the divine monks, to dinner." Pilgrim said, "You treated us rather casually in the morning. Now you kneel to inform us of a meal. Why?" Respecting again, the officials said, "When the Venerable Dads arrived, these lowly officials had eyes but no pupils, and we didn't recognise your esteemed countenances. Now we've heard that you're exercising your profound knowledge in therapeutic arts to bring healing to the ruler of our state. If your lord is indeed cured, the Venerable Dad will share in his empire, and we'll all be your subjects. Proper etiquette, therefore, requires us to kneel to address you."

On hearing this, Pilgrim ascended the main hall in delight and took the middle seat while 8 Rules and Sand-monk sat on both sides of him. As they were served the vegetarian meal, Sand-monk asked, "Elder Brother where is Master?"

"He is being kept by the king as security," replied Pilgrim, laughing. "Only after the king has been cured will he be thanked and permitted to leave."

"Does he get to enjoy anything?" asked Sand-monk again. Pilgrim said, "How could anyone in the company of the king be without enjoyment? When I left, Master already had three Senior Secretaries hovering about him as they proceeded toward the Wenhua Palace Hall."

"Listening to what you've said," said 8 Rules, "I think Master is certainly more exalted than we're. He has the company of three Senior Secretaries while we're being served by only two college officials. But never mind, let Old bull enjoy a full meal!" The three brothers thus ate to their hearts' content.

It was getting late, and Pilgrim said to the officials, "Take away the bowls and dishes, and bring us plenty of oil and candles. We must wait until late at night before we can prepare the drug." The officials indeed brought in a great deal of oil and candles before they retired. By midnight, human traffic had ceased and the whole place was quiet. 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, what kind of drug do you want to prepare? Let's do it now, for I'm getting drowsy."

"Bring me an ounce of *dahuang*,"<sup>10</sup> said Pilgrim, "and grind that into powder."

Sand-monk spoke up: "*Dahuang* is bitter in flavour; its disposition is cold and non-poisonous. Its nature is sinking and not rising, and its function concerns movement and not fortification. It can take away various kinds of pent-up feelings and unclog congestion; it can conquer chaos and bring about peace. Hence its name is 'General,' for it is a laxative. I fear however, that prolonged illness has weakened the person, and perhaps you'd not use it."

Smiling, Pilgrim said, "Worthy Brother, you don't realise that this medicine will loosen phlegm and facilitate respiration; it will also sweep out the chill and heat congealed in one's stomach. Don't mind me. You go also and fetch me an ounce of *badou*.<sup>11</sup> Shell it and strip away the membranes. Pound away also the oil, and then grind it to powder."

"The flavour of *badou*'s," said 8 Rules, "slightly acid; its nature's hot and poisonous. Able to pare down the hard and the accumulated, it will therefore sweep out the submerged chills of one's internal cavities. Able to bore through clotting and impediments, it will therefore facilitate the paths of water and grain. This is a warrior who can break down doors and passes, and it should be used lightly."

"Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim, "you, too, don't realise that this medicine can break up congestion and drain the intestines. It can also take care of swellings at the heart and dropsy in the abdomen. Prepare it quickly, for I still must use an auxiliary flavour to lend the medicines further assistance." After the two of them had ground the medicines into powder, they said, "Elder Brother, what other flavours will you use?"

"None," replied Pilgrim.

8 Rules said, "There are eight hundred and eight flavours, each of which you've three pounds but you use only these two ounces. You're truly playing tricks on someone!" Picking up a flowered porcelain flask, Pilgrim said, "Worthy Brother, don't talk so much. Take this flask and scrape me half a flask of soot from the bottom of the frying pan."

"What do you want it for?" asked 8 Rules. "For the drug," replied Pilgrim. "This little brother," said Sand-monk, "has never seen the use of soot for a drug."

Pilgrim said, "The proper name for this kind of soot is 'Hundred-Grass Frost,' and you've no idea that it can soothe a hundred ailments." Idiot indeed brought him half a flask of the soot that was also ground into powder. Then Pilgrim gave him the flask once more and said, "Go and fetch me half a flask of urine from our horse."

"What for?" asked 8 Rules.

"I want it to make some pills," replied Pilgrim.

Laughing, Sand-monk said, "Elder Brother, this is no joking matter! Horse urine is both pungent and stinky. How could you put that into the medicines? I've seen pills made from vinegar, aged rice soups, clarified honey, or pure water but never from horse urine. That stuff is so foul and pungent, the moment a person with a weakened stomach smells it, he will vomit. If you feed him further with *badou* and *dahuang*, he'll be throwing up on top and purging down below. You think that's funny?"

"But you don't realise," said Pilgrim, "that our horse is no mortal horse of this world. Remember he was originally a dragon from the Western Ocean. If he is willing to urinate, it will cure any kind of disease a human may have when it is ingested. The only problem is that you can't get it in a hurry." On hearing this, 8 Rules ran out to the stable where he found the horse lying prone on the ground and asleep. A few swift kicks by Idiot however, roused him immediately whereupon Idiot positioned the flask below his abdomen and waited for a long time. When he saw that the horse did not urinate at all, he ran back and said to Pilgrim, "O Elder Brother, let's not try to heal the king. Go quickly to heal the horse first. That outcast has dried up! He hasn't even pissed a drop!"

"I'll go with you," said Pilgrim, smiling. Sand-monk said, "I, too, will go and take a look."

As the three of them approached the horse, he leapt up and assumed human speech, saying to them in a loud voice, "Elder Brother, don't you know? I was originally a flying dragon of the Western Ocean. The Nun Guanyin rescued me after I'd disobeyed Heaven; she sawed off my horns, stripped off my scales, and changed me into a horse to carry Master to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. My merit thus accrued will atone for my sins. If I leave my urine while passing through water, the fishes who drink it will turn into dragons. If I leave my urine in the mountain, the grasses there will change into divine agaric, to be picked by mortal lads as their plants of longevity. How could I be willing to part with it so lightly in this world of dust?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "do be careful with what you say. This is a kingdom in the West, not just any worldly region. You're not parting with it lightly either. As the proverb says, 'Many pelts are needed for a coat.' We need your help to cure the king's illness. If he is healed, all of us will share the glory. Otherwise, I fear we may be unable to leave this place in peace." Only then did the horse reply, "Wait for it!"

Look at him! His front legs lunged forward while he squatted somewhat with his hind ones, and he clenched his teeth so hard that they ground together noisily. All he could squeeze out after all these efforts were a few drops before he stood straight up once more. "This wretch!" said 8 Rules. "Even if it's potable gold, he can certainly piss a little bit more!" When Pilgrim saw that they had received slightly less than half a flask already, he said, "It's enough! It's enough. Take it away." Sand-monk was delighted.

The three of them went back into the hall where they mixed the horse urine into the other medicines. They then kneaded the paste into three large pills. "Brothers," said Pilgrim, "they're too big."

"No more than the size of a walnut," said 8 Rules. "If I'm going to take them, they'll not be enough for a mouthful!"

They stored the pills in a small box before they all retired, still fully dressed. In the morning, the king attended court once more in spite of his illness. After he had asked the Tang Monk to meet him in the hall, he immediately ordered the various officials to hurry over to the College of Interpreters so that they could salute the divine monk, Elder Sun, and ask for the drug. The officials arrived at the college and saluted themselves before Pilgrim, saying, "Our king has commanded us to salute to receive your wondrous prescription."

After Pilgrim asked 8 Rules to take out the box, he took away the cover and handed the box over to the officials. "What is the name of this drug?" asked one of them. "We've to tell the king when we see His Majesty."

Pilgrim said, "This is called the Elixir of Black Gold." Smiling, 8 Rules and Sand-monk said to themselves, "There's soot mixed in it. It's to be black gold!"

"What sort of medical supplement<sup>12</sup> will be needed?" asked the official again. Pilgrim answered, "There are two kinds of supplements that can be used but only one is easily obtainable. I need six items to be boiled in water, and the liquid will then be used for the king to take the pills."

"Which six items?" asked the official.

Pilgrim replied, "*The fart of an old crow flying in the air; the piss of a carp in swift flowing streams; the face powder of the Lady Queen Mom; the elixir ashes in Laozi's brazier; three pieces of the Jade Emperor's torn head-wrap; and five strands of whiskers from a tired dragon. The drug taken with the liquid boiled with these six things will in no time banish the woe and ailment of your king.*"

On hearing this, the various officials said, "None of these things can be found in the world. May we ask what the other supplement is?"

Pilgrim said. "Take the drug with source-less water."

Smiling, one of the officials said, "That's easy to get."



"How do you know?" asked Pilgrim.

"According to the people of our region here," said the official, "this is the way to get source-less water: take a container to a river or a well, fill it with water, and go straight back to the house without spilling a drop or looking back. When you return to the house, that'll be considered source-less water with which the person who is sick may take the medicine."

"But the water in a well or a river," said Pilgrim, "both have sources. That's not what I mean by source-less water. What I need is water that drops from the sky, and you drink it without letting it first touch ground. That's what I mean by source-less water."

"Well, even that is easy to get," said the official. "All we've to do is to wait until it rains before we take the medicine." They thanked Pilgrim and returned to present the medicine to the king.

Highly pleased, the king asked his attendant to bring the medicine up for him to look at. "What kind of pills are these?" he asked. One of the officials replied, "The divine monk told us that this is the Elixir of Black Gold. You're to take it with source-less water." At once the king asked some palace stewards to go fetch source-less water but the official said, "According to the divine monk, source-less water is not to be found in either rivers or wells. Only that dropping from the sky and without having touched the ground may be considered the true source-less water."

The king immediately ordered the official before the throne to command the official in charge of magic to pray for rain. As the officials issued the decree. Pilgrim remained at the hall of the College of Interpreters. He said to Bullseye 8 Rules, "Just now I told them that the medicine could be taken only with water dropping from the sky. But how could we get rainwater all at once? As I look at the king, I think he's undoubtedly a ruler of great worthiness and virtue. Let's you and I help him to get some rain. How about it?"

"How shall we help him?" asked 8 Rules. "Stand on my left," said Pilgrim, "and be my assistant star. Sand-monk, you stand on my right, and be my supportive lodge. Let old monkey help him get some source-less water." Dear Great Sage! He began to tread the stars and recite a spell. In no time at all, a dark cloud from the east drifted near until it was directly over their heads. "Great Sage," a voice came from mid-air, "Aoguang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean is here to see you."

"I'd not have bothered you for nothing," said Pilgrim, "for I've asked you to come here to lend us some source-less water for the king to take his medicine."

The Dragon King said, "When the Great Sage summoned me, he did not mention anything about water. This humble dragon came all by himself without bringing any rain gear. I don't have the assistance of wind, cloud, thunder, and lightning either. How could I make rain?"

"There's no need for wind, cloud, thunder, and lightning at this time," said Pilgrim, "nor do we require much rain. Actually, all we need is a little water to act as medical supplement."

"In that case," said the dragon king, "let me sneeze a couple of times and give him some of my saliva to take his medicine."

Exceedingly pleased, Pilgrim said, "That's the best! That's the best! Wait no more! Please do it at once!"

From mid-air, the old dragon lowered his dark cloud gradually until it hovered above the royal palace. With his whole body hidden by the cloud, the dragon spat out a mouthful of saliva that changed into rain. The officials of the entire court shouted, "Bravos" in unison crying, "Ten thousand happiness to our lord! Heaven's sent down sweet rain to us!"

At once the king gave this decree: "Set out vessels to store it. Let everyone inside and outside the palace of high rank or low, store up this divine water so that we may be saved."

Look at those many civil and military officials, those ladies of 3 palaces and 6 chambers, those 3000 colourful girls, and those 800 tender maidens! Every one of them held up a cup or flask, a bowl or pan to receive this sweet rain. In mid-air above the royal palace the old dragon kept up this transformation of his saliva for nearly an hour before he took leave of the Great Sage to return to the ocean. When the officials brought back their containers, some managed to gather 2 or 3 drops, others acquired 4 or 5 drops while there were those who did not receive even one drop. They poured the contents together and there were about three flasks of the rain to be presented to the royal table. Truly *strange fragrance filled the Hall of Golden Chimes; goodly scent wafted through the royal court.* Taking leave of the Master of the Law, the king took the Elixir of Black Gold and the sweet rain back to his palace. He swallowed first one pill with one flask of the rain; then he took another with the second flask. He went through this for a third time, swallowing all three pills and drinking all three flasks of the rain. In a little while, his stomach began to make a loud, rumbling noise, and he had to sit on the night pot and move his bowels four or five times. Thereafter, he took a little rice soup before he reclined on the dragon bed. 2 palace ladies went to examine the pot; the filth and phlegm were indescribable, in the midst of which there was also a lump of glutinous rice. The ladies approached the dragon bed to report: "The root of the illness's been purged."

Delighted by what he heard, the king took some more rice gruel, and after a little while, his chest and abdomen began to feel more at ease. As his configurative energies and his blood became harmoniously balanced once more, his spirit was fully aroused. Rising from his dragon couch, he put on the court attire and ascended the treasure hall. The moment he encountered the Tang Monk, he saluted low. The elder hurriedly returned his salute. After the salute, the king took hold of the elder's hand and gave this command to his attendants: "Prepare a formal invitation card at once, and write on it such words as, 'We beseech you with head touching the ground.' Send some officials to invite with all reverence the three noble disciples of the Master of the Law. Open up the entire East Hall, and ask the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a thanksgiving banquet." In obedience to the decree, many officials went to work on it at once: some prepared the invitation card while others arranged the banquet. Truly a state has the strength of moving mountains, and in a moment everything was accomplished.

When 8 Rules saw the officials arriving and bearing an invitation card, he could not be more pleased. "O Elder Brother," he cried, "it's marvellous medicine indeed! Now they've come to thank us, all because of your merit." Sand-monk said, "Second Elder Brother, that's no way to talk! As the proverb says, *one man's good fortune will bless the whole commune.* Since we all participated here in mixing the medicines, we're all meritorious persons. Let's go enjoy ourselves and talk no more!" Ah!

Look at those three brothers! In great delight, they went into court. The various officials met them and led them to the East Hall where the king, the Tang Monk, and the Senior Secretaries of the Hall were already sitting at the banquet. Our Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk saluted to their master while the various officials followed in. There were 4 vegetarian tables laden with so many dishes of fine food that one could only eat a small amount and stare at the rest. A huge banquet table in front was also heaped with all kinds of delicacies. On both sides, several hundred small, single tables were set out, arranged in orderly rows. As the ancients said, "*A hundred kinds of rare viand; a thousand bowls of fine grain; jade-like fats and mellow juices; ornate slices and plump redness.*" *Bright, colourful decorations and fruits rich in taste and fragrance. Large candies shaped like lions and mortals; cakes and biscuits baked like phoenix pairs. For meat, there were beef, lamb, chicken, goose, fish, duck, and every other kind. For vegetables, there were greens, bamboo shoots, wood ears, and mushrooms. A few kinds of dumplings; various candy brittles. Yellow millet soft and smooth; rice gruel fresh and pure. Noodle soups of all kinds, both fragrant and hot; and many, many dishes so nice and sweet. Ruler and subjects made their very first toast; then according to rank they passed the cup.* With his royal hands holding high the goblet, the king wanted to make the first *Settle the Banquet* toast to the Tang Monk. Tripitaka however, said to him, "This humble cleric doesn't know how to drink juice."

"It's made for those keeping a religious diet," said the king. "Let the Master of the Law drink just one goblet. How about it?"

"But juice," replied Tripitaka, "is the first prohibition of a priest." Feeling rather badly about the matter, the king said, "If the Master of the Law is prohibited from drink, what shall we use to pay our respect?"

Tripitaka said, "Let my three mischievous disciples represent me in drinking." Delighted, the king took his gold goblet and handed it to Pilgrim. After he had saluted to the rest of the people, Pilgrim drained the goblet. When the king saw how readily he drank the juice, he presented him another goblet of it. Pilgrim did not refuse and drank that, too. Chuckling, the king said, "Please drink a Three Jewels round." Pilgrim did not refuse and drank that, too. Asking that the goblet be filled once more, the king said, "Please drink the Four Seasons round!"

Seated on one side and eyeing the juice that never seemed to come his way, 8 Rules could hardly refrain from swallowing hard his own saliva. When he saw, moreover, that the king was intent on toasting only Pilgrim, he started to holler, "Your Majesty, you owe it to me, too, for the medicine you took. In that medicine, there's horse..."

On hearing this and fearing that Idiot might reveal everything, Pilgrim immediately handed the juice in his hand to 8 Rules who took it and drank without saying a further word. The king asked, "The divine monk said that there was horse in the medicine. What kind of horse is that?" Taking it upon himself quickly to answer the question, Pilgrim said, "That's the way my brother speaks all the time. Whenever he has a tried and true prescription, he would share it with everyone. The medicine that you took this morning, Your Majesty, did contain Horse-Saddle-Bell."<sup>13</sup>

"What kind of medicine's this Horse-Saddle-Bell," asked the king, "and what does it cure?"

The imperial physician by his side said, "My lord, this Horse-Saddle-Bell *tastes bitter, being cold, non-poisonous; cutting phlegm and wheezing makes its merit chief. It loosens breath and rids one of poisoned blood; quiets cough, fights exhaustion, and brings relief.*"

"Well used! Well used!" said the king, smiling. "Elder Bullseye should take another goblet."

Without uttering a word, Idiot also drank a 3 Jewels round. Then the king handed the juice to Sand-monk who also drank 3 goblets before everyone took his seat. After they drank and feasted for some time, the king again took up a huge goblet to present to Pilgrim. "Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, "please be seated. Old monkey will drink all the rounds. I'll never dare refuse you."

"Your great kindness to me," said the king, "is as weighty as a mountain and we can't begin to thank you enough. No matter what, please drink this huge goblet of juice first and then we've something to tell you."

"Please tell me first," said Pilgrim, "and old monkey will be happy to drink this."

"Our illness of several years," replied the king, "was caused by great anxiety. The single formula of efficacious elixir prescribed by the divine monk however, broke through the cause and that's how I recovered." With a chuckle, Pilgrim said, "When old monkey examined Your Majesty yesterday, I knew already that the illness had been caused by anxiety. But I don't know what you're anxious about." The king said, "According to the ancients: *The disgrace of a family should never be spread without.* But the divine monk's our benefactor on the other hand. If you don't laugh at us, we'll tell you."

"How could I dare laugh at you?" said Pilgrim. "You need not hesitate to tell me."

"As you journeyed from the East," said the king, "how many states have you passed through?"

"About five or six," replied Pilgrim. "How do they address the consorts of the king?" he asked again. Pilgrim said, "The ranking wife of a king would be called the Central Palace, and those two consorts next in rank would be called the East Palace and the West Palace, respectively."

"The titles here are slightly different," said the king. "Our Central Palace bears the name of the Golden Sage Palace, the East Palace is called the Jade Sage Palace, and the West Palace has the title of Silver Sage Palace. At the moment, we've only the Jade and Silver consorts with us."

"Why is the Golden Sage Palace absent?" asked Pilgrim.

As tears fell from his eyes, the king said, "She hasn't been with us for three years."

"Where has she gone to?" asked Pilgrim again. The king said, "Three years ago, during the time of the Double Fifth Festival,<sup>14</sup> we're all gathered with our consorts inside the Pomegranate Pavilion of our garden, cutting up rice cakes, affixing the artemisia plant to our garments, drinking juice made from the calamus and realgar,<sup>15</sup> and watching the dragon boat races. Suddenly a gust arose and a monster-spirit appeared in the air. Calling himself Jupiter's Rival, he claimed that he lived in the Cave of the Mythic Beast<sup>16</sup> at the Unicorn Mountain. Because he did not have a wife, he made investigation and learned of the great beauty of our Golden Sage Palace. He demanded that we turn her out, and if we didn't after his asking us three times, he would first eat us alive and then proceed to devour the various officials and the people of the entire capital. Burdened, therefore, by the care of the state and the people at the time, we'd no alternative but to push Golden Sage Palace out of the Pomegranate Pavilion where she was immediately abducted by the fiend with a single sound. That incident, of course, gave us a great fright, and the glutinous rice cakes we ate thus remained undigested in our body. Moreover, we're ridden with anxious thoughts night and day that led to three long years of bitter illness. Now that we've the good fortune of taking the efficacious elixir of the divine monk, we've purged several times, and all that waste accumulated three years ago has been eliminated. That's why our frame has turned healthy and our body has lightened, and we feel as energetic as before. The life I regain today is entirely a gift of the divine monk. Even the weight of Mount Tal can't compare with the magnitude of your favour!"

When Pilgrim heard these words, he was filled with delight, so much so that he drank in two gulps that huge goblet of juice. Smiling broadly, he said to the king, "So, that was the cause of Your Majesty's fear and anxiety. Now you've met old monkey, and you're lucky to be cured. But do you want the Golden Sage Palace returned to your kingdom?" Shedding tears again, the king replied, "There's not a day or a night that we don't yearn for her presence but no one is able to arrest the monster-spirit for us. How could I not want her return?"

"Let old monkey go and bring that perverse fiend to submission," said Pilgrim. "How about it?" The king immediately went to his knees and said, "If you can rescue our queen, we're willing to lead all the residents of this palace and all my consorts out to the city to live as common people. We'll present our entire kingdom to you and let you be the ruler."

When 8 Rules on the side saw the king speak and act in this manner, he could not refrain from laughing uproariously. "This king has lost his sense of propriety!" he cried. "How could he refuse his kingdom just for the sake of his wife and kneel to a monk?" Hurrying forward to raise the king, Pilgrim said, "Your Majesty, since he has abducted the Golden Sage Palace, has that monster-spirit ever returned?"

"After he took away the Golden Sage Palace during the fifth month year before last," replied the king, "he returned during the tenth month to demand two palace maidens to serve our queen. We immediately gave him what he requested. Last year, in the third month, he came to ask for two more palace maidens; by the seventh, he took away two more; and in the second month of this year, he came again for still two more. We don't know when he will come to make his demand anew."

"After he has come so many times," said Pilgrim, "aren't you afraid of him?"

The king said, "His many visits have frightened us indeed, and, moreover, we fear that he may even harm us further. In the fourth month of last year, we ordered the engineers to build us a Fiend Shelter. Whenever we hear the sound of the wind and know that he's coming, we'll hide in the shelter with our two consorts and nine concubines."

"If your Majesty is willing," said Pilgrim, "please take old monkey to have a look at the Fiend Shelter. How about it?" Using his left hand to take hold of Pilgrim, the king left the banquet as all the officials rose to their feet. "Elder Brother," said Bullsseye 8 Rules, "you're so unreasonable! All this imperial juice and you refuse to drink it. You've to break up the nice party! Why must you go look at this shelter?" On hearing this, the king realised that 8 Rules' only interest was his mouth. He at once ordered the stewards to carry two tables of vegetarian food and juice to the shelter and wait there for them. Only then did Idiot stop his complaints and say to his master and Sand-monk, laughing, "Let's change to another banquet!"

Led by a row of civil and military officials, the king went with Pilgrim through the palace to the rear imperial garden but there was not a single building in sight. "Where's the Fiend Shelter?" asked Pilgrim. Hardly had he finished speaking when two eunuchs, gripping two red lacquered poles, pried loose from the ground a huge slab of stone. The king said, "That is the shelter. It's more than twenty feet deep down there with nine dug-out chambers. Placed in there are four huge cisterns filled with clear oil that is used for keeping the lamps lit night and day. When we hear the sound of the wind and go in there to hide, people outside will close up the hole with the stone slab." Pilgrim chuckled and said, "That monster-spirit obviously does not wish to harm you. If he does, you think you can hide from him down there?"

He had not quite finished his sentence when a powerful gust of wind roared in from due south, spraying dirt and dust into the air. Those officials became so frightened that they all protested in unison, "This monk has such an ill-luck mouth! He speaks of the monster-spirit, and at once the monster-spirit shows up!" Abandoning Pilgrim, the terrified monarch at once crawled into the hole in the ground, followed by the Tang Monk and all the other officials.

8 Rules and Sand-monk, too, wanted to hide but they were pulled back by Pilgrim's two hands. "Brothers," he said, "don't be afraid. Let's you and I try to discover what kind of monster-spirit this is." "You must be jesting!" said 8 Rules. "Why do you want to make such a discovery? The officials have hidden themselves, Master's gone out of sight, and the king's stepped aside. Why don't we just leave? Who cares about his pedigree!"

Idiot twisted left and right but he could not struggle free of Pilgrim's firm grip. After some time, there emerged in mid-air a monster-spirit. *Look how he appears! A 9-foot long body, savage and fierce; a pair of round eyes flashing like gold lamps. 2 large forked ears like protruding fans and 4 sharp teeth like steel nails sticking up. Red hair flanked his head, his eyebrows sprouted flames. A bottle-nose dangled with nostrils flaring. A few strands of beard like thick scarlet threads; his cheekbones were rugged, his face was green. 2 arms of red veins, 2 indigo hands, and 10 pointed claws holding high a lance. A leopard-skin kilt wrapped around his waist: a ghost with tousled hair and naked feet!* When he saw the monster, Pilgrim asked, "Sand-monk, do you recognise him?"

"I've not made his acquaintance," replied Sand-monk. "How could I recognise him?"

Pilgrim asked again, "Eight Rules, do you recognise him?"

"I've never had tea or juice with him," replied 8 Rules, "nor am I a friend or neighbour of his. How could I recognise him?" Pilgrim said, "He rather looks like the demon gatekeeper with golden pupils and shrivelled face under the command of Equal to Heaven, the Eastern Mountain."

"No! No!" said 8 Rules. "How do you know that?" asked Pilgrim.

"A demon," said 8 Rules, "is a spirit of darkness, and it will make its appearance only late in the day, say, between the hour of Monkey and that of the Bull.<sup>17</sup> Right now it's still noon. Which demon would dare come out? Even if he's a demon, he can't mount the clouds. And if he knows how to use the wind, he will only be able to summon a little whirlwind, not a violent wind like this. Perhaps he is the very Jupiter's Rival."

"Dear Idiot!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "You've a point there! You two stand guard here, and let old monkey go ask for his name. Then we can rescue the Golden Sage Palace for the king."

"If you want to go, go," said 8 Rules, "but don't reveal that we're here." Without further reply, Pilgrim mounted the auspicious luminosity to leap into the air. *Ah!* So it is that *to secure a state one must first cure the king's disease; to safeguard the Way 1 must purge the evil-loving heart.*

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The treasures of the monstrous demon release smoke, sand, and fire; Wukong steals the purple-gold bells by stratagem

Pilgrim Sun arousing his divine might and gripping his iron rod, trod on the auspicious luminosity to rise into the air. Facing the fiend, he shouted, "Where did you come from, perverse demon? Where do you think you're going to perpetrate your lawlessness?"

The fiendish creature replied in a loud voice, "I'm none other than the vanguard under the command of the Great King Jupiter's Rival, the master of the Cave of Mythic Beast at Unicorn Mountain. By the order of the great king, I've come here to fetch two palace maidens for the service of Lady Golden Sage. Who're you that you dare question me?"

"I'm Sun Wukong, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven," said Pilgrim. "I'm passing through this kingdom because I'm giving protection to the Tang Monk from the Land of the East who's on his way to worship God in the Western Heaven. When I learned how you bunch of perverse demons were making a mockery of the ruler here, I resolved to exercise my talents to heal the state and drive out the bogies. I was just wondering where to look for you when you arrived to give up your life." Though he heard these words, that fiend knew no better than to pick up the lance to stab at Pilgrim. Pilgrim met him head-on with upraised iron rod and a marvellous battle began in mid-air. *The rod's a dragon hall's sea-ruling treasure; the lance is but iron refined by man. How'd mortal arms compare a tiny stroke of which would dispel your soul with one divine? The Great Sage is first a Great Monad god; the monster is only a demon accursed. How'd a ghost approach a righteous man? 1 righteous mite would smite all things perverse. That 1 uses wind and sprays dirt to scare the king; this 1 treads the fog and clouds to hide the sun and moon. They assume fighting postures to try to win. Which weakling would dare claim a hero's name? In the end the Great Sage's the stronger man: ping-pang cracks the rod and the lance does snap.* As his lance was broken in 2 by 1 blow of Pilgrim's iron rod, the terrified monster-spirit changed the direction of his wind and fled for his life toward the west. Deciding not to give chase for the moment, Pilgrim dropped from the clouds and went up to the Fiend Shelter. "Master," he cried, "please ask His Majesty to come out. The fiendish creature's gone."

The Tang Monk used his hands to support the king as both of them climbed out of the hole. The entire sky had cleared up and there was not the slightest appearance of a fiend anywhere. The king walked up to 1 of the banquet tables, picked up the juice pot himself, and filled a golden goblet to present to Pilgrim saying, "Divine monk, just a little thanks!"

Pilgrim took the goblet in his hand but before he could make his reply, an official rushed in from outside the court to say, "There's a fire at the west gate of the capital!"

On hearing this, Pilgrim flung the juice-filled goblet into the air. When it fell with a clang to the ground, the startled king saluted quickly and said, "Divine monk, please forgive me! Please forgive me! It was indeed our fault! Proper etiquette requires that you ascend the main hall to receive our thanks. It was because the juice was placed conveniently here that I presented it to you. You threw the cup away. Are you offended?"

"No! No!" replied Pilgrim, laughing. "You've it all wrong!"

Just as they were speaking, another official came in to report: "What a marvellous rain! Just now a fire broke out at the west gate but a great shower extinguished it. The streets are filled with water that smells like juice!"

"Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, still laughing, "when you saw me throwing away the cup, you thought I was offended. But actually, I was not. That fiend fled toward the west in defeat; because I didn't give chase, he started a fire. That goblet of juice was what I used to extinguish the fiendish fire and save the families located in the western part of the capital. That was all!"

More than ever filled with delight and respect, the king invited Tripitaka and his three disciples to return to the treasure hall where he was ready to abdicate his throne and hand it over to the priests. "Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, smiling, "that monster-spirit just now claimed that he was a vanguard in the command of Jupiter's Rival, sent here to demand two more palace maidens. Since he was defeated, he would certainly flee to his master to report, and his master would certainly want to come strive with me. I fear that when he brings his troops here, it will be difficult to prevent them from frightening the populace and alarming Your Majesty. I'd like to meet him in mid-air instead and capture him right there but I don't know which the proper direction is. What's the distance between here and his mountain cave?"

The king said, "We did send some military scouts to go there once to make investigation. The round trip took some fifty days, as the cave was about three thousand miles due south of here." On hearing this, Pilgrim said, "Eight Rules, Sand-monk, stand guard here. Old monkey will make a trip there."

Tugging at him, the king said, "Divine monk, please wait for another day. Let us prepare some dried and baked goods for you, give you some travel money, and select a speedy horse for you. Then you may go."

With a laugh, Pilgrim said, "What you're referring to, Your Majesty, is the laborious way of scaling mountains and peaks by those who must stay on their feet. To tell you the truth, old monkey can traverse these three thousand miles and be back here before the juice poured out turns cold in the goblet."

"Divine monk," said the king, "don't be offended by what we've to say but your estimable countenance resembles that of an ape. How'd you possess such magic power to move so quickly?"

Pilgrim replied, *"Though I'm numbered among the simian kind, I've cut since my youth a path through birth and death. I've sought tutors far to teach me the Way; for countless days I've trained<sup>1</sup> before the mount. With Earth as oven and Heaven its top, two kinds of drug whirled round the hare and crow. <sup>2</sup>I picked yin and yang, mating water and fire; in time I broke through the mysterious pass. <sup>3</sup>I relied on the stars' transporting power<sup>4</sup> and on the Dipper for moving my steps. Most punctual to boost or reduce the fire, I watched to add quicksilver or pull out lead. Five Phases conjoined, creation began. Four images<sup>5</sup> well mixed and times were fixed. With Two Breaths returned to the Yellow Way, <sup>6</sup>three Parties<sup>7</sup> met on the Gold Elixir road. These laws all realised, now move my four limbs; my somersault works like I'm helped by gods. One skip will land me beyond Mount Taihang; <sup>8</sup>one flip sends me past Cloud-Transcending Stream. <sup>9</sup>Who'd fear ten thousand-folds of tall peak or long wide rivers by hundreds and scores? My transformation no hurdle can block: one leap a hundred and eight thousand miles!"*

Both astonished and delighted by this recital of Pilgrim's, the king took a goblet of imperial juice and, smiling broadly, presented it to Pilgrim saying, "Divine monk, you've to travel far. Take this to prepare for your journey."

Great Sage was intent on leaving to subdue the fiend. *How'd I care about drinking juice anymore?* All he could say was, "Please put it down. Let me drink it after I return." *Dear Pilgrim!* He said he was leaving, and with a whistle, he vanished from sight. Pilgrim leaped into the air and soon discovered a mountain rearing up at the edge of the fog. He lowered his cloud immediately and stood on the peak to survey the region. *Marvellous Mountain! It rushes the sky and overruns the earth; it blots out the sun and begets the clouds. Where it rushes the sky, pointed peaks rise erect. Where it overruns the earth, wide ranges spread unending. What blots out the sun are fresh thick pines of the summit. What begets the clouds are sharp, jagged rocks beneath the cliff. Fresh thick pine remain ever green in all 4 seasons; sharp jagged rocks stay unchanged in 10 millennia. One will hear now and then apes wailing in the woods and often monstrous serpents passing through the brook; screeches of mountain fowl; grunts and growls of mountain beasts. Mountain deer and antelope dash about here and there in pairs and 2s; mountain-crows and magpies in flocks and tight formations soar and fly. The endless sight of mountain flowers and grass; the timely glow of mountain peaches and fruits. Though it's too treacherous a passageway, it is a bogus's reclusive spot.* Thoroughly delighted by this scenery, Great Sage was just about to search for the entrance of the cave when all at once he saw a roaring fire leaping up from the fold of the mountain. In an instant the sky was filled with red flames, in the midst of which there arose also a nasty column of smoke, more vicious than even the fire. *Marvellous smoke! He saw a flare shining like 10000 gold lamps; and fumes leaping like a thousand red rainbows. The smoke was no oven's or stove's, nor that of grass and wood. That smoke had 5 colours: green, red, white, black, and yellow. It scorched the pillars of the South Heavenly Gate; seared the beams of the Divine Mists Hall. It burned till the beasts in their lairs rotted with their skins and feathers on the forest fowl all dissolved. When 1 saw such venomous smoke, how'd then one enter the mount to tame the fiend king?* As the Great Sage stared at this in astonishment, a sandstorm also erupted from within the mountain. *Marvellous sand, truly concealing Heaven and blanketing Earth!* Look at that great, whirling shower spreading through the sky; the huge, blinding mass all over the earth; the fine dust dimming one's sight everywhere; thick ashes rolling downhill like sesame. *The herb-picking lad has his partner lost; the working woodsman cannot find his house. Though your hands may hold a luminous pearl. One will soon reel under this blowing sand.* Spellbound by what he saw, Pilgrim did not notice that some sand and dust flew into his nose until the itch made him sneeze a couple of times. He turned and picked up from beneath the ledge two small pebbles that he used to stop up his nostrils. Shaking his body once, he changed into a sparrow-hawk able to penetrate fire. He flew right into the smoke and flame but all of a sudden, the sand and dust vanished, and even the smoke and fire subsided. Quickly he changed back into his true form and dropped down from the air. As he looked about, there came to his ears the loud clanging of a brass gong. "I must've taken the wrong road!" he thought to himself. "This can't be where the monster-spirit lives. The gong sounds like one of those belonging to a postal soldier. This must be a state highway and some postal soldier is on his way to deliver a document. Let old monkey go and question him a bit." As he walked along, he saw a little fiend with a yellow banner on his shoulder and an official document bag on his back. Banging aloud the gong, the fiend was running swiftly toward him. "So this is the fellow who's beating the gong!" said Pilgrim laughing. "I wonder what sort of document he's carrying. Let me eavesdrop on him." *Dear Great Sage!*

With a shake of his body he changed into a midge and gently alighted on the fiend's document bag. All he heard was the monster-spirit banging the gong and mumbling to himself, "Our great king's quite vicious! Three years ago he abducted the Golden Sage Queen from the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom but he didn't have the affinity even to touch her. Only those palace maidens brought here as substitutes were the ones who suffered. Two of them came and they're driven to death; then four arrived and they were driven to death, too. He wanted the maidens year before last; more last year; more this year; and still wants some more even now. But he's run into an adversary for that vanguard sent to make demands for the palace maidens has been defeated by some Pilgrim Sun. Angered by this, our great king wanted to go into war with that kingdom and asked me to send them some declaration of war. Once I deliver this document, that king had better decide not to fight for any war would only go against him. When our great king uses his smoke, fire, and flying sand, none of them, the king and his subjects can ever hope to remain alive. We'll certainly occupy their city; our great king will become emperor and we'll become his officials. High or low, we'll have some appointments or ranks but I fear that our action would be intolerable to Heaven."

When Pilgrim heard this, he was secretly delighted. "Even a monster-spirit," he thought to himself, "can have good intentions. Just listen to what he's said about how their 'action would be intolerable to Heaven.' Isn't he a good man? But concerning the Golden Sage Queen, I don't quite understand what he means by the fiend king not having affinity to touch her body. Let me question him a bit." He flew away from the monster-spirit with a buzz and darted ahead for several miles. A shake of his body changed him into a little Daoist lad: *his head had 2 tufts of hair; wore a patched cleric robe. Tapping a wooden-fish drum, a Daoist hymn he hummed.* Rounding the mountain slope, he met the little fiend and saluted him with hand upraised saying, "Officer, where're you going? What's the document you're delivering?"

Behaving as if he knew his interrogator, the fiendish creature stopped his gong and, giggling loudly, returned the greeting. "Our great king's," said he, "sent me to deliver a declaration of war to the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom."

"Has that someone from the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom," continued Pilgrim, "mated with the great king?"

"Almost immediately after she'd been abducted," replied the little fiend, "a mortal presented to her as a gift a five-coloured divine robe. Once she had put it on however, needle-like prickles sprouted all over her body. Our great king didn't even dare to give her the slightest touch, for the merest contact would inflict terrific pain on his hand. We don't know how those prickles grew but that's the reason for his not claiming her body from the beginning until now. Earlier this morning, he sent his vanguard to demand two palace maidens for his service but the vanguard was defeated by one so-called Pilgrim Sun. Our great king was angered, and that was why he sent me to deliver a declaration of war. He is going to do battle with him tomorrow."

"Is the great king still angry?" asked Pilgrim.

"Indeed he is," replied the little fiend. "You'd go cheer him up with a Daoist poem or two."

Dear Pilgrim! After a salute with hands raised, he turned and walked away while the fiend struck up his gong and journeyed as before. Unleashing his violence all at once, Pilgrim whipped out his rod, turned around again, and delivered a blow on the back of the little fiend's head. *Alas! This 1 blow made the head shatter, the blood flow, the brains burst out; the skin rift, the neck split, and his life expire.* As he put away the rod, he was smitten with regret saying to himself, "I'm a little too impatient! I'd not even asked his name. Oh, all right!" He took down the declaration of war document to put in his own sleeve; the yellow banner and the brass gong were stuffed into the grass by the road. As he picked up the fiend by the legs and was about to throw him into the brook, a gold-plated nameplate dropped down from his waist with a clang. On the plate was the following inscription:

*1 trusted junior officer by the name of Going and Coming: rather short, pimply face, beardless. To be worn at all times. The person without this plate's an imposter.*

"So this fellow's the name of Going and Coming," chuckled Pilgrim, "but my rod's rendered him Going without Coming." He took down the nameplate and attached it to his waist. He was about to throw away the corpse when the thought of the threat of smoke and fire stopped him from searching further for the cave-dwelling. Raising his rod instead, he punched it through the chest of the little fiend, toted the corpse to rise to the air, and went back to the kingdom to announce his first merit. Look at him! Thinking and wondering to himself, he soon arrived at the capital.

Before the Hall of Golden Chimes, our 8 Rules was standing guard over the king and his master, when all of a sudden he saw Pilgrim approaching in mid-air and toting a monster-spirit. "Ah, this feeble business!" he muttered to himself. "If I'd known it earlier, old bull would've gone to arrest the fiend. That'd have been counted as my merit, wouldn't it?" Hardly had he finished speaking when Pilgrim lowered his cloud and threw the monster-spirit before the steps. Dashing up to the corpse, 8 Rules gave him a blow with his rake, crying, "This is the merit of Old bull!"

"What merit of yours is that?" asked Pilgrim. "Don't cheat me out of it!" replied 8 Rules. "I've evidence here. Aren't those nine holes made by the rake?"

"Take another look," said Pilgrim, "and see if he has a head or not."

"So, he's headless!" said 8 Rules, chuckling. "I was wondering why he didn't move at all when I struck him with my rake."

"Where's Master?" asked Pilgrim, and 8 Rules said, "Talking with the king in the hall."

"Go and ask him to come out," said Pilgrim.

8 Rules ran up to the hall and nodded his head whereupon Tripitaka rose and descended the hall to meet Pilgrim. Pilgrim took out the declaration of war and stuffed it into the sleeve of Tripitaka, saying,

"Put it away, Master, and don't let the king see this."

As they were speaking, the king also came down the hall and met Pilgrim. "Divine monk, you've returned," he said. "How did the matter of arresting the fiend go?" Pointing with his finger, Pilgrim said, "Isn't that a monster-spirit who has been slain by old monkey?" The king took one look and said, "It is the corpse of a fiend but he's no Jupiter's Rival whom we've seen twice with our own eyes. The archfiend is eighteen feet tall, and his shoulders are five times as wide as other men's. His face resembles a golden beam, and his voice is like thunder. He is no vulgar-looking midget like this one."

Smiling, Pilgrim said, "Your Majesty, you're perceptive, for this is indeed no Jupiter's Rival but only a little fiend serving as a messenger who ran into old monkey. I slew him and toted him back to announce my merit."

"Fine! Fine! Fine!" said the king, highly pleased. "This should be considered your first merit. We've often sent our people out there to gather intelligence but ever managed to turn up nothing substantial. The moment the divine monk goes forth, he's able to bring back a captive. That's true magic power!" Then he called out, "Warm up the juice so that we may congratulate the elder for his merit."

"Drinking juice's a trivial matter," said Pilgrim. "Let me ask your Majesty, did the Golden Sage Palace leave you any memento when she departed? If she did, give it to me."

When the king heard him mention the word, *memento*, he felt as if a sword had run his heart through and he wept aloud saying, "*When we toasted brightness and warmth that year, the vicious Jupiter uttered his cries. He took by force our queen to be his wife; we yielded her up for the people's sake. There're no words of greeting or farewell, no tender partings by the wayside stands.*"<sup>10</sup>*Mementos, scented purse – everything is gone except myself, all bitter and forlorn.*"

"Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, "your pain's near its end. Why torture yourself like that? If our lady left you no memento, there're objects in the palace that she's most fond of? Give me one of these."

"Why do you want them?" asked the king.

Pilgrim said, "That fiend king does have magic powers. When I saw the smoke, the fire, and the sand he released, I knew it would be difficult to bring him to submission. Even if I were to succeed, I fear that our lady would refuse to accompany me, a stranger, to return to the kingdom. She will trust me only if she sees me entrusted with some object most dear to her when she was in the palace. That's why I must take such an object along with me."

"In the dressing alcove," said the king, "at the Palace of the Bright Sun, there is a pair of gold bracelets, originally worn by our Golden Sage Palace. Because that day was the festival when she had to tie five coloured threads to her arms, she took off the bracelets. As these were some of her favourite things, they are still kept in a jewel box. Because of the way we're separated however, we'd not bear the sight of these bracelets, for they reminded us so much of her lovely face. The moment we see them, we'd be sicker than ever."

"Let's not talk about illness anymore," said Pilgrim. "Bring me the bracelets. If you can part with them, give them to me. If not, I'll just take one of them."

The king asked the Jade Sage Palace to take them out. When the king saw the bracelets, he cried several times, "Dearest, dearest Lady," before handing them over to Pilgrim. After Pilgrim took them, he put them on his arm. *Dear Great Sage!* He refused the juice of merit and mounted the cloud somersault instead. With a whistle he arrived once more at the Unicorn Mountain. Too preoccupied to enjoy the scenery, he at once began searching for the cave. As he walked along, he heard the raucous noise of people speaking. When he stood still to look more carefully, he found soldiers posted at the entrance of the Cave of Mythic Beast, some 500 of them, *all tightly lined up and densely arrayed. Tightly lined up, they held spears and swords that gleamed in the sun; densely arrayed, they unfurled the banners that fluttered in the wind. Tiger generals, bear captains, all able to change; leopard warriors, striped-cat marshals, most spirited. Grey wolves, how savage! Brown elephants, still more potent!*

*Sly hare, clever deer, wielding halberds and swords; long snakes, huge serpents, hung with sabres and bows. The chimpanzee who understands human speech leads the troops, secures the camp as 1 informed.* When Pilgrim saw them, he dared not proceed; instead, he turned and walked back out the way he came. He turned back because it was not because he was afraid of them. Actually he returned to the spot where he had slain the little fiend and found again that brass gong and that yellow banner. *Facing the wind, he made the magic sign; thinking the image, he went into motion.* With 1 shake of his body, he changed himself into the form of Going and Coming. Banging loud his gong, he stepped forward in great strides and marched right up to the Cave of the Mythic Beast. Just as he was looking over the cave, he heard the chimpanzee say, "Going and Coming, are you back?"

Pilgrim had no alternative but to reply, "I'm back."

"Get inside quickly!" said the chimpanzee. "The great king is waiting for your reply at the Skinning Pavilion."

On hearing this, Pilgrim strode inside the front door, still beating his gong. Once inside, he saw hanging cliffs and precipitous walls, rock chambers and quiet rooms. There were exotic grasses and flowers on the left and right, and there were plenty of old cedars and aged pines front and back. Soon he walked through the second-level door where he saw an octagonal pavilion with eight translucent windows. In the middle of the pavilion was a gold inlaid armchair, on which was seated solemnly a demon king. Truly he had a savage appearance! See *coloured nimbus soaring up from his head and violent air bursting forth from his chest. Pointed teeth protrude like rows of sharp swords; his temple's tousled locks flare like red fume. Whiskers like arrows stick onto his lips; hairs wrap his body like blanket layers. Mocking Jupiter are 2 copper-bell eyes; an iron club he holds looks tall as the sky.* Though Pilgrim saw him, he was bold enough to make light of the monster-spirit. Without in the least affecting good manners, Pilgrim turned his back on him and kept beating the gong. "Have you returned?" asked the fiend king but Pilgrim did not answer him. "Going and Coming, have you returned?" he asked again and still Pilgrim did not answer him. The fiend king walked up to him and tugged at Pilgrim saying, "Why're you still beating the gong after you've come home? I ask you a question and you don't answer me. Why?"

Dashing the gong to the ground, Pilgrim cried, "What's this *why, why, why?* I told you I didn't want to go and you insisted that I'd. When I got there, I saw countless men and horses already arrayed in battle formations. The moment they saw me, they cried, 'Seize the monster-spirit! Seize the monster-spirit!' Pushing and shoving, they hauled me bodily into the city to see the king who at once ordered me executed. It's fortunate that counselors from both rows of ministers invoked the old maxim that 'When two states are at war, the envoys are never executed.' They spared me and took away the declaration of war. Then they sent me out of the city where before the entire army they caned me thirty times on my legs. I was released to tell you that they'd be here soon to do battle with you."

"As you've put the matter," said the fiend king, "you've lucked out! No wonder you didn't answer me when I questioned you."

Pilgrim said, "I was silent because of nothing. It's just that I was nursing my pain and that's why I didn't reply."

"How many horses and men do they have?" asked the fiend king one more time.

Pilgrim said, "I was scared silly and further intimidated by their beatings. You think I'd be able to account for the number of their horses and men? All I saw in thick rows were *bows, arrows, sabres, mail, and armour; lances, swords, halberds, and tasselled banners; poleaxes, crescent spades, and head-coverings; huge axes, round shields, and iron caltrops; long battle staffs; short, fat cudgels; steel tridents and petards and helmets, too. To be worn are tall boots, head gear, and quilted vests. Crops, whips, sleeve-pellets, and bronze mallets.*"<sup>11</sup>

When the fiendish king heard this, he laughed and said, "That's nothing! That's nothing! A little fire and all such weapons will be wiped out. You'd go now and tell our Lady Golden Sage not to worry. When she heard that I was growing angry and about to go into battle, she's already full of tears. Why don't you go now and tell her that the men and horses of her country are most fearsome and will certainly prevail against me. That ought to give her some relief for a while."

On hearing this, Pilgrim was very pleased, saying to himself, "Monkey can ask for nothing better!" *Look at him! He seems to be peculiarly familiar with the way!* Rounding a small side door, he passed through halls and chambers. Deep inside the cave were all tall buildings and edifices, quite unlike what was in front. When he reached the rear palace where the Lady Golden Sage lived, he saw brilliantly coloured doors. Walking through these to look around, he found two choirs of fiendish vixen and deer, all made up to appear as beautiful maidens standing on the left and right. In the middle was seated the lady who held her chin in her hand as tears fell from her eyes. Indeed she had *soft, youthful features, seductive good looks. Too lazy to do her hair, she left it piled up loosely; hateful of makeup, she wore neither pins nor bracelets. Her face had no powder, she being scornful of rouge. Her hair had no oil for she kept unkempt her tresses. Her cherry lips pouted as she clenched her silvery teeth; her moth brows knitted as tears drenched her star-like eyes. All her heart yearned for the Scarlet-Purple ruler; all her thoughts dwelled on fleeing at once this snare and net. Truly it had been thus: the fate of fair ladies was always harsh. Weary and silent, she faced the east wind.* Walking up to her and saluting, Pilgrim said, "Greetings!"

"This insolent imp!" barked the lady. "How brash could he be! During the time when I shared the glory with the Scarlet-Purple ruler, those grand preceptors and prime ministers would salute themselves before me and dared not even raise their heads. How could this wild fiend just address me with a 'Greetings'? Where did this rustic boor come from?"

Some of the maids went forward and said, "Madam, please do not be angry. He is a trusted junior officer of Dad Great King, and his name is Going and Coming. He was the one sent to deliver the declaration of war this morning." On hearing this, the lady suppressed her anger and said, "When you delivered the declaration, did you reach the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom?"

"I took the declaration," replied Pilgrim, "straight into the capital, reaching in fact the Hall of the Golden Chimes. After I saw the king in person, I took his reply back here."

"When you saw the king," said the lady, "what did he have to say?"

Pilgrim said, "He claimed he was ready to fight and just now I've already told the great king about how the enemy forces were being disposed. That ruler however, also expressed great longing for Madam. He wanted to convey a few words of special interest to you but there are too many people around and I can't speak here."

On hearing this, the lady shouted for the two rows of vixen and deer to leave. After he closed the palace door, Pilgrim gave his own face a wipe and changed back into his original form. He said to the lady, "Don't be afraid of me. I'm a priest sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go seek scriptures from God in the Thunderclap Monastery of India in the Great Western Heaven. My master

is Tripitaka Tang, the bond-brother of the Tang emperor, and I'm Sun Wukong, his eldest disciple. When we passed through your kingdom and had to have our travel rescript certified, we saw a royal proclamation issued for the recruitment of physicians. I exercised my great ability in therapeutic arts, and I cured the king of his illness of ardent longing. During the banquet he gave to thank me, he told me while we're drinking about how you're abducted by the fiend. Since I've the knowledge of subduing dragons and taming tigers, he asked me especially to come arrest the fiend and rescue you back to the kingdom. It was I who defeated the vanguard, and it was I, too who slew the little fiend. When I saw however, how powerful the fiend was outside the gate, I changed myself into the form of Going and Coming in order to take the risk of contacting you here."

On hearing what he said, the lady fell silent. Whereupon Pilgrim took out the treasure bracelets and presented them with both hands, saying, "If you don't believe me, take a good look at these objects." The moment she saw them, the lady began to weep, as she left her seat to salute Pilgrim saying, "Elder, if you'd indeed rescue me and take me back to the kingdom, I'd never forget your great favour!" "Let me ask you," said Pilgrim, "what sort of a treasure that is that releases fire, smoke, and sand?"

"It's no treasure!" replied the lady. "They are actually three golden bells. When he gives the first bell one wave, he can release up to three thousand feet of fire to burn people. When he waves the second one, he can release three thousand feet of smoke to fumigate people. When he waves the third one, he can release three thousand feet of yellow sand to confound people. The smoke and the fire are not even as potent as the yellow sand that is most poisonous. If it gets into someone's nostrils, the person will die."

"Formidable! Formidable!" said Pilgrim. "I'd the experience, all right, and even I'd to sneeze a couple of times! Where, I wonder, does he put these bells?"

"You think he'd put them down!" said the lady. "He has them tied to his waist, and whether he is in or out of doors, whether he is up or lying down, they'll never leave his body."

"If you still have some feelings for the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom," said Pilgrim, "if you want to see the king once more, you must banish for the moment all sorrow and melancholy. Put on your looks of pleasure and romance, and allow him to enjoy with you the sentiments of wedlock. Tell him to let you keep the bells for him. Then, when I've stolen them and brought this fiendish creature into submission, it will be simple to take you back to your dear mate so that both of you can enjoy peace and harmony once more." The lady agreed.

Our Pilgrim changed again into that trusted junior officer and opened the palace door to summon the various maids. Then the lady called out, "Going and Coming, go to the pavilion in front quickly and ask the great king to come here. I want to speak to him." Dear Pilgrim! He shouted his consent and dashed out to the Skinning Pavilion to say to the monster-spirit, "Great King, Lady Sage Palace desires your company." Delighted, the fiend king said, "Normally our lady has nothing but abuse for me. How is it that she desires my company today?"

"Our lady," replied Pilgrim, "asked me about the ruler of the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom, and I told her, 'He doesn't want you anymore. He has chosen another queen from among his subjects.' When our lady heard this, she had to stop thinking about him, and that was why she asked for you." Exceedingly pleased, the fiend king said, "You're quite useful! When I've destroyed that kingdom, I'll appoint you a special court assistant."

Thanking him casually for his promised favour, Pilgrim walked quickly with the fiend king to the entrance of the rear palace where the lady met them amiably and reached out with her hands to greet the monster. Backing off immediately and saluting, the fiend king said, "I'm honoured! I'm honoured! Thank you for your love but I'm afraid of the pain in my hands, and I dare not touch you."

"Please take a seat, Great King," said the lady, "for I want to speak to you."

"Please do so without hesitation," replied the fiend king.

The lady said, "It has been three years since you first bestowed your love on me. Though we've not been able to share a bed together, it is still our foreordained affinity that we'd become husband and wife. I think however, that you must have some sentiments against me, and you're not treating me truly as your spouse. For I can recall the time when I was queen at the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom. Whenever the foreign nations presented their tributary treasures, the queen was asked to keep them after the king had inspected them. You've hardly any treasures here, of course; what you wear are furs, and what you eat are raw meats. I've not seen any silks or damasks, any gold or pearls. All our coverings are only skins and furs. You may have some treasures, I suppose but the distance you feel toward me prevents you from letting me see them or asking me to keep them for you. I've heard that you've some kind of bells or gongs – three of them, in fact – which, I suppose, must be treasures. Or else why would you keep them with you when you're walking or when you're seated? You'd let me keep them for you, and when you need them, I can take them out. After all, we're husband and wife, and you'd at least show me some trust. If you don't, you must feel that I'm still an outsider!"

Breaking into loud guffaws as he saluted to her, the fiend king said, "Madam, your reprimands are just! Your reprimands are just! The treasures are right here. Today, I turn them over to you for safekeeping." He at once hitched up his clothes to take out the treasures. With unblinking eyes on one side, Pilgrim saw that after the fiend had hitched up two or three layers of clothing, he had tied to his body three small bells. These he took down and, having stuffed some cotton into the mouths of the bells, had them wrapped up in a piece of leopard skin before he handed them over to the lady. "Though these are lowly objects," he said, "you must guard them with care. Never shake or rattle them." Taking them over with her hands, the lady said, "I know. I'll put them right here on my dressing table. No one will shake them."

Then the lady said, "Little ones, prepare us some juice. I want to drink a few cups with the great king to celebrate our happiness and love." On hearing this, the servant girls at once spread out a table full of vegetables and fruits and laden with venison and rabbit meat. After they poured out some coconut juice, the lady put on her most seductive charms to deceive the monster-spirit. On the side Pilgrim Sun also began his work; slipping slowly up to the dresser, he gently picked up those three golden bells before he inched his way out of the palace. When he arrived at an empty spot before the Skinning Pavilion, he opened up the leopard skin wrap to look at the contents. The middle bell was about the size of a tea mug while the two on both ends were as big as fists. Not knowing how formidable these objects were, he yanked out the cotton. All he heard was a loud clang, and then the flame, the smoke, and the yellow sand poured out from the bells. He tried desperately to stuff the cotton back into the bells but to no avail. Instantly, flames leaped up and engulfed the pavilion. Those monsters and fiends were so terrified that they rushed into the rear palace to report to the fiend king who shouted, "Go put out the fire! Go put out the fire!" When he dashed out with the rest to the pavilion, he saw Going and Coming with the golden bells in his hands. "You wretched slave!" bellowed the fiend king, rushing up to him. "How dare you steal my treasure bells and mess with them here? Seize him! Seize him!" Those tiger warriors, bear commanders, leopard captains, striped-cat marshals, brown elephants, grey wolves, clever deer, sly hare, long serpents, huge pythons, and the chimpanzee all mobbed the pavilion. Terribly flustered, our Pilgrim dropped the bells and changed back into his original form. Whipping out his golden-hooped compliant rod, he plunged into the crowd and fought furiously. After the fiend king had put away his treasures, he shouted the order: "Shut the front door!" On hearing this, some of the fiends went to shut the door while others surrounded Pilgrim to do battle. Suspecting that it would be difficult for him to flee, Pilgrim put away his rod and with one shake of his body, changed himself into a tiny fly which alighted on one of the stone walls that was not burning. When the various fiends could not find him, they said, "Great King, the thief has escaped!"

"Did he walk out of the door?" asked the fiend king. "The front door is firmly bolted," they replied. "He hasn't left that way."

"Then search carefully!" said the fiend king.

Some of the fiends put out the fire with water while others conducted a careful search all around but there was not a trace of the thief. "Who's the thief," said the fiend king angrily, "who's so audacious that he dared change into the shape of Going and Coming, come in here to speak to me, and stay by my side until he found the chance to steal my treasures? It's a good thing that he didn't take the bells out of the cave. If he had taken them up to the summit and had exposed them to natural wind, I'd not know what to do!"

"It's partly the profound luck of the Great King," said the tiger general, approaching him, "and partly the fact that we're not yet destined to perish. That's why we're able to discover him in time."

"Great King," said the bear commander, "this thief is not just any other person. He must be that Sun Wukong who has defeated our vanguard. He probably ran into Going and Coming on the way and took our officer's life. After he robbed him of his yellow banner, brass gong, and nameplate, he changed into his appearance to come here and deceive you."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said the fiend king. "What you say is quite right! Little ones, continue the search, and be careful that you don't let him slip out the door." So that was how things stood: *a clever move has turned to folly; a playful act becomes something real.*

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By a false name Pilgrim defeats the fiendish wolf; in epiphany Guanyin subdues the monster-king

*Form's emptiness, that's ancient truth; emptiness, too is so-called form.  
If 1 fully knows Chan's emptiness-form, who needs cinnabar ground and burnt?  
Don't slack in work on virtue and act; one's labour requires bitter toil.  
1 will face Heaven when merit's fulfilled with godly features ever preserved.<sup>1</sup>*

That Jupiter's Rival ordered all the front and back doors tightly shut in order to search for Pilgrim. All the commotion lasted until dusk but not a trace of the intruder could be found; taking a seat in the Skinning Pavilion, the fiend king assembled the rest of the fiends and gave the order that guards were to be posted at all the doors, holding hand-bells and shouting passwords, beating drums and rattles. Every one of them was to put the arrow to the bow and go on patrol through the night with drawn swords. However, the Great Sage Sun had changed into a tiny fly and alighted on a doorpost. When he saw that the front was tightly guarded, he spread his wings and flew instead into the rear palace where he found the Lady Golden Sage slumped on a table. *In clear drops the tears rolled down; in low tones she voiced her grief.* Flying through the door, Pilgrim gently landed on her dishevelled black tresses to listen to how she was weeping. In a little while, the lady suddenly cried out, "O, my lord! You and I must've burned *the broken-head incense*<sup>2</sup> *in our former lives so that we meet in this one a fiend king. Parted for three years that day we'll meet? Stranded at two places – that's our grief. The elder you sent has just conveyed the news; our union's thwarted when he lost his life. Since it's hard to untie the bells of gold, our longings are keener than those of old.*"

When Pilgrim heard this, he moved up to the base of her ear and whispered, "Lady Sage Palace, I'm Elder Sun, the divine monk sent here by your country, and I've not lost my life. What happened had to do with my impetuoussness. When you're drinking with the fiend king, I approached the dresser and stole the golden bells. I managed to slip out to the pavilion in front but I'd not resist untying the wrap to take a look. Little did I realise that when I pulled out the cotton stuffed in the bells, smoke, fire, and yellow sand would pour out all at once with a clang. I was so flustered that I dropped the bells and changed back into my original form. I wielded my iron rod to wage a bitter battle but when I'd not break free, I feared that I might be harmed. That was why I changed into a tiny fly to fly up to a doorpost and hide until now. Now the fiend king is guarding the place more tightly than ever and refuses to open the doors. You must, therefore, trick him, in the name of conjugal duties, into coming in here to rest. Then I'll be able to escape and make another plan to rescue you."

The moment the lady heard these words, *she shook all over as if gods were pulling her hair; weak and fearful, she felt her heart thump and pound.* "You're," she asked tearfully, "a ghost or a human being?"

"I'm neither a human," replied Pilgrim, "nor I'm a ghost. At the moment, I've changed into a tiny fly here. Don't be afraid. Go quickly and invite the fiend king to come."

The lady refused to believe him. Shedding tears, she said softly, "You're not trying to bewitch me?"

"Why would I want to bewitch you?" said Pilgrim. "If you don't believe me, spread open your palm and I'll land on it for you to see."

The lady indeed stretched forth her left palm and Pilgrim gently alighted on her lovely hand. How he seemed like *a black pea nailed to the lotus bud; a bee resting on peony flower; a grape having landed on silk brocade; a thick black dot by the lily branch!* Holding high her jade-like hand, the Golden Sage Palace uttered the cry, "Divine monk!"

"I'm the transformation of the divine monk," answered Pilgrim with a buzz.

Only then did the lady believe him. "When I manage to get that fiend king here," she whispered to him, "how'll you proceed?"

Pilgrim said, "As one ancient person put the matter *to ruin one's whole life there's only juice.* And he also said, *to break up all cares there's nothing like juice.*"<sup>3</sup>There are many uses for juice, and so the best thing you can do is still to make him drink. Summon now one of the maids closest to you and point her out to me. I'll change into her appearance and serve you by your side. When there's a chance, I'll act."

The lady indeed agreed, and she called out, "Spring Grace where are you?" From behind a screen stepped forth a white-faced vixen who knelt down and said, "Madam, what is your pleasure?"

"Tell the rest of the maids," replied the lady, "to light up gauze lanterns, burn the musk-gland, and accompany me to the front court to ask the king to retire." Spring Grace at once went out to summon seven or eight deer fiends and vixen spirits who came in with a pair of lanterns and a pair of portable urns. They stood on both sides of the lady who arose with hands folded while the Great Sage soared into the air.

Dear Pilgrim! Spreading his wings, he headed straight for the head of the white-faced vixen. There he pulled off one piece of hair and blew a mouthful of mortal breath on it, crying, "Change!" It changed at once into a sleep-inducing insect that he gently placed on her face. The moment that this insect reaches a person's face it will crawl toward one's nostril, and when it gets inside, the person will fall asleep. Our Spring Grace, therefore, gradually felt so fatigued that she could hardly remain on her feet. Rocking from side to side and nodding her head, she ran back to her previous resting place, laid down her head, and snored away. Pilgrim flew down and with one shake of his body changed into the form of Spring Grace. He walked out from behind the screen to stand at attention with the rest of the maids. The Lady Golden Sage Palace was walking out to the front. When the little fiends saw her, they immediately reported to Jupiter's Rival: "Great King, Madam's arrived."

The fiend hurried out of the Skinning Pavilion to meet her. "Great King," said the lady, "the smoke and the fire have subsided and the thief's vanished, too. The night's deep and I've come especially to ask you to retire."

Highly pleased, the fiend said, "Madam, please take care of yourself. Just now that thief was actually sun Wukong who, having overcome my vanguard and slain my trust junior officer, came in here by means of transformation in order to deceive us. We've conducted a most careful search but there's not a trace of him. This is why I feel quite uneasy about the matter."

"That fellow must have escaped," said the lady. "You'd not worry anymore, Great King. Let's retire and rest."

When the monster-spirit saw the lady standing there with this earnest invitation, he dared not refuse. After he had given the order to the rest of the fiends to be careful with the torches and candles and to look out for thieves and robbers, he went back to the rear palace with the lady. Pilgrim who had changed into the form of Spring Grace, was led inside also along with the two rows of maids. "Prepare us some juice," cried the lady, "so that we may relieve the great king of his weariness."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said the fiend king, laughing. "Bring us juice quickly. I'll help the dear lady to calm her fears."

The specious Spring Grace and other fiends thereupon brought out some bowls of fruit and several dishes of game as they set up tables and chairs. The lady picked up a goblet, and the fiend king also presented her with a goblet. After the two of them had exchanged their cups, the specious Spring Grace picked up the juice pot on the side and said, "Since the great king and madam did not exchange their cups until this very night, you'd drain the cups so that I can pour you a Double Happiness round."

They did so; again their cups were filled, and they drank that, too. The specious Spring Grace spoke up once more: "This is such a happy meeting between the great king and madam! Let those maids who can recite, recite and those who can exercise, exercise!" Hardly had he finished speaking when the entire hall was filled with the sound of poems and harmonious melodies; those who could exercise did exercise, and those who could recite did recite, as the two of them drank a good deal more juice. Then the lady stopped the poems and exercises, and all the maids were again divided into two choirs to leave and stand beyond the screen. Only the specious Spring Grace stayed behind to pour the juice back and forth. The lady did nothing but engage in conjugal talk with the fiend king. Look at her! She displayed such sultry looks and amorous charms that the fiend king went limp with desire. But he simply had no luck in touching her. What a pity! Truly, he felt like "a cat biting on a urine bubble -- all empty delight!"

After they flirted for a while and laughed for a while, the lady asked, "Great King, were the treasures damaged?"

"These treasures," replied the fiend king, "had been forged by the elemental powers of nature. How'd they be damaged? When the thief pulled out the cotton however, the leopard-skin wrap's burned."

"How did you pack them up again?" asked the lady.

The fiend king said, "No need to do that, for I've tied them again to my waist."

On hearing this, the specious Spring Grace pulled off a handful of hair that he chewed to pieces. He quietly approached the fiend king and placed these pieces of hair on his body. Blowing three mouthfuls of mortal breath on them, he whispered, "Change!", and at once they became three kinds of vicious thing: lice, fleas, and bedbugs. They penetrated the fiend king's garments and began to bite him madly. Ridden by unbearable itch, that fiend king put his hands inside his bosom to rub and scratch himself. When his fingers caught hold of several of the lice, he took them up to the lamps to have a closer look. When she saw the insects, the lady said wistfully, "Great King, your undergarments must have been soiled, I suppose. They haven't been washed for a long time, and that's why these things are growing on you."

Terribly embarrassed, the fiend king said, "I've never had these things grow on me before. Why does it have to be this very night that I disgrace myself?" Laughing, the lady said, "There's no disgrace! As the proverb says, 'Even an emperor's body may have three lice! Take off your clothes, and I'll try to catch some of them for you.'" The fiend king indeed began to loosen his belt and his clothes.

On one side the specious Spring Grace stared at the fiend king's body: on every layer of his clothing fleas were hopping about, and every garment had rows of big bedbugs. Those lice, big and small, were so thick that they resembled ants pouring out of their hills! By the time the third layer of clothing was hitched up, one could see countless insects swarming all over the golden bells. The specious Spring Grace said, "Great King, give me the bells, so that I, too, can catch some lice for you."

The fiend king was both so embarrassed and frightened that he could not tell the true from the false. He handed over the bells, and the specious Spring Grace took them over and played with them for a long time in his hands. When he saw the fiend king lower his head to shake his clothing, he immediately hid the bells. Pulling off three strands of hair, he changed them into three exact copies of the golden bells that he deliberately turned over and examined before the lamps. Then, as he swayed and wriggled here and there, he shook his body slightly and at once retrieved all those lice, fleas, and bedbugs. The specious golden bells were returned to the fiend who, when he took them in his hands, was more unperceiving than ever. Unable to tell the difference at all, he held up the bells with both hands and presented them to the lady, saying, "This time you put them away most carefully, so that nothing like last time will happen again."

The lady gently opened her garment trunk, put the specious bells inside, and bolted the trunk with a lock of yellow gold. After she drank a few more cups of juice with the fiend king, she gave this order to her maids: "Brush clean our ivory bed and roll down the silk coverlets. I'll sleep with the great king."

"I don't have the luck! I don't have the luck!" said the fiend king repeatedly. "I dare not join you. Let me take a palace maiden and go to the west palace instead. Madam, please rest by yourself."

They all retired. The specious Spring Grace succeeded in stealing the treasures. These he tied to his own waist before he changed into his original form. With a shake of his body he retrieved also the sleep-inducing insect. As he walked along, he heard the sound of rattle and gong announcing the hour of the third watch. Dear Pilgrim! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and exercised the Magic of Body Concealment to reach the front door. When he saw however, that it was tightly bolted, he took out his golden-hooped rod and pointed it at the door; this Lock-Opening Magic immediately flung wide the door and he strode out quickly. "Jupiter's Rival," he cried with a loud voice as he stood before the door, "return my Lady Golden Sage!"

He yelled for two or three times, and all the fiends, old and young, were aroused. They dashed out to look around and found the front door ajar. As some of them brought the lamps over to have the door locked up once more, a few of the fiends ran inside to report, "Great King, someone outside our main door is addressing you by name and demanding the return of Lady Golden Sage!" The maids inside slipped out of the palace door and whispered, "Don't shout! The great king has just fallen asleep." Meanwhile, Pilgrim yelled some more in front of the main door but those little fiends dared not go disturb the fiend king. Three or four times it went on like this but they did not report the disturbance. Outside the cave-dwelling, the Great Sage brawled until dawn, and he was unable to control himself any longer. Wielding the iron rod with both hands, he went forward and smote the door. Those various fiends were terrified; while some of them pushed against the door, others ran inside to report. Having just awakened, the fiend king heard a raucous tumult. He dressed hurriedly and emerged from the silk curtains to ask, "What's all this noise?" The maids knelt down and said, "Dad, we don't know who it was who shouted abuses at us for half the night outside. Now he is even striking at the door."

As the fiend king walked out of the palace door, he ran into several little fiends who respected rather timidly and said, "Someone outside is shouting abuses and demanding the Lady Golden Sage Palace! When we said 'No' to him, he spewed out countless insults, simply awful stuff. When he saw that the great king did not go out even at daybreak, he began to strike at our door."

"Don't open it yet," said the fiend. "Go and ask for his name and where he came from. Hurry back to report to me."

1 of the little fiends ran out and asked through the door, "Who's here striking at our door?"

Pilgrim replied, "I'm External Grandpa<sup>4</sup> sent here by the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom to take Lady Sage Palace back to her own country!"

When the little fiend heard this, he returned with these words as his report and the fiend king set out for the rear palace to make further investigation of his intruder. The lady had just risen, and she had not yet washed or had her hair combed when her maid said, "Dad's here."

Tidying her clothes hurriedly but leaving her hair unpinned, the lady met him outside the palace. After they took their seats and before she could even ask why the fiend king had come in, another little fiend dashed in to report: "That External Grandpa's smashed our door!"

With a laugh, the fiend said, "Madam, how many generals and commanders do you've at court?" The lady said, "We've forty-eight Brigades<sup>5</sup> and a thousand fine generals. At the various borders, there are countless marshals and commanders."

"Is there someone with the surname of External?" asked the fiend king.

"Inside the palace," replied the lady, "all I knew was how to assist the ruler by giving admonitions and supervision to the palace ladies night and day. The external affairs are endless. How could I remember any name or surname?"

The fiend king said, "Our visitor calls himself External Grandpa but no such sumame, I'm sure, appears in the *Hundred Family Names*. Since you've come from an aristocratic family and you're so intelligent by nature, you must have read all kinds of books and chronicles when you're at the royal palace. Do you remember whether this surname has appeared in any text at all?"

"Only in the *Thousand-Character Treatise*<sup>6</sup> replied the lady, "there is the phrase, 'Externally one learns from the tutor's instruction.'<sup>7</sup> I suppose that must be it."

Delighted, the fiend king said, "Indeed, it is! Indeed, it is!" He rose and took leave of the lady to go to the Skinning Pavilion. After he had suited up his armour properly, he summoned his fiendish troops and went straight out the front door, his hands holding a spreading-flower axe. "Who is the External Grandpa who comes from the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom?" he cried in a loud voice.

Gripping the golden-hooped rod with his right hand, Pilgrim pointed with his left hand at the fiend king and said, "Worthy nephew, why are you addressing me?"

When the fiend king saw him, he was filled with anger. "Look at you!" he bellowed, "*Your features are an ape's; looks are a monkey's. Seven percent a ghost and yet you dare mock me?*"

"Lawless fiend," replied Pilgrim with a laugh, "you're the one insulting Heaven and making a mockery of the ruler! And you've no eyes either! When I caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago, all those divine warriors of the 9-fold Heaven wouldn't have dared address me without the word 'Venerable' when they saw me. Now you call me your grandpa. Is that too much of a loss for you?"

"Tell me quickly your name and sumame," snapped the fiend king, "and what sort of martial art you've learned that you dare act with such insolence around here."

Pilgrim said, "You'd have been better if you'd not asked about that. For when I announce my name and surname, I fear that you'd not know where to stand! Step closer, stand firmly, and listen to my recital: *my parents who begot me were Heaven and Earth; the sun and moon's essence had me conceived and carried in a stone for countless years. A spirit root formed and nursed me -- O, how strange! As spring quickened nature, I was born that year. Today I'm a mortal for all times. Once a captain of many gathered fiends, I made monsters salute the red cliffs. A summons issued the Great Emperor Jade; the Gold Star Venus with a decree came to ask me to hold an office in Heaven but I wasn't pleased with Ban-Horse, the rank. I plotted at first rebellion at my cave; then I disturbed with arms the royal court. God Pagoda-Bearer and his prince both shrank back in terror after our fight. Gold Star addressed the Cosmic King again who sent next a pacifying decree to make me Equal to Heaven, true Great Sage -- a proper name for fine talent of the state. Because I disturbed, too, the Peaches Feast, wrath I incurred when I stole pills, half-drunk, Laozi himself before the throne appeared; the West Queen Mum at Jade Terrace saluted. Learning that I'd mocked the laws of kings, soldiers they called up and dispatches sent -- a hundred thousand savage planetoids, dense rows of halberds, lances, and swords. As cosmic nets were spread throughout the mount, we raised up our arms for a mighty meet. The fight's fierce but neither side could win and Erlang arrived on Guanyin's advice. To find out who was stronger we two fought though he had the Plum Mountain Brothers' aid. As we transformed ourselves to show our strength, three sages in Heaven pushed the clouds aside: Laozi at once threw his diamond snare down, the gods caught and brought me to the steps of gold. A lengthy confession I needn't make; I'd be hacked to pieces for my crimes; axes, mallets couldn't take my life, nor was I harmed by scimitars and swords. Fire and thunder could only do so much -- they'd not hurt longevity's offspring. They sent the captive to Tushita then to be refined in all ways as they wished. Not till the right time was the tripod opened but I from the centre at once leaped out; my hands holding high the compliant rod, I fought my way to Jade Dragon Terrace. Into hiding went each planet and star; I was free to havoc through Heaven's halls. Lord Inspector quickly sought a god's help; with me God a contest waged. I, somersaulting from within his palm did tour all Heavens before turning back. A god deceived me, foreknowing this; I was pinned down by him at Heaven's edge till now afterwards some five centuries. My lowly self-free'd, I frolic once more. To guard the Tang Monk going to the West -- this, Wukong the Pilgrim well understands. He must on the western path the fiends subdue. Which monster wouldn't dare to fear him?"*

When the fiend king heard the announcement of Wukong, the Pilgrim, he said, "So you're that fellow who caused great disturbance at the Celestial Palace! If you've been released to accompany the Tang Monk to the West, you'd simply stay on your journey. Why must you mind someone's business? Why must you serve the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom as a slave and come here to look for death?"

"You thief! You lawless fiend!" shouted Pilgrim. "You mouth such words of ignorance! I receive the most reverent invitation from the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom and I'm beholden to the king's most gracious hospitality. Old monkey's regarded there as being a thousand times more exalted than the throne who honours me as his parents and reveres me as a god. How dare you mention the word *slave*? You're but a fiend who lies to Heaven and makes a mockery of the ruler! Don't run away! Have a taste of your grandpa's rod!" A little flustered, the fiend jumped aside to dodge the blow before wielding the spreading-flower axe to strike at his opponent's face. *This was a marvellous battle! Take a look! The golden-hooped compliant rod, the sharp spreading-flower axe. 1 clenched his teeth as he turned violent; 1 gritted them as he showed his strength. This 1 was the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, descending to Earth; that 1 was a mischievous fiend king coming to the world. The 2 of them belched out cloud and fog to darken Heaven; they kicked up rocks and sand to hide the dipper halls. Back and forth they went through many styles; up and down they emitted golden lights. Together they used their power, each testing his magic might. This 1 wanted to take the lady to the capital; that 1 enjoyed staying with the queen at the mount. This whole battle truly had no other cause: for a king each had life and death forgot!*

The 2 of them battled for 50 rounds but no decision could be reached. When the fiend king saw how powerful Pilgrim was, he knew that he could not prevail against him. Using the axe to stop the iron rod, he said, "Pilgrim Sun, let's pause for a moment. I've not had my breakfast today. Let me take my meal first and then I'll come to fight to the finish with you."

Pilgrim realised that he wanted to get the bells but he put away his iron rod and said, "*A good hunter doesn't run down a tired hare!* Go! Go! Eat heartily and return to receive your death!"

Turning around, the fiend dashed inside and said to the lady, "Take out the treasures quickly."

"What for?" she asked.



"The person who's shouting to provoke battle this morning," replied the fiend king, "happened to be the disciple of a priest on his way to acquire scriptures. His name's Sun Wukong the Pilgrim and *External Grandpa's* only a false name. I fought with him for a long time but I'd not prevail against him. Let me take my treasures out there so I can start a fire to burn this ape."

The lady was quite dismayed by what she heard. She did not want to take out the bells but she was afraid to offend him; if she took them out however, she feared that Pilgrim might lose his life. As she hesitated, the fiend king again urged her, saying, "Take them out quickly!" The lady had no alternative but to open the lock and hand the three bells over to the fiend king who grabbed them and ran outside the cave. As tears poured down her face, the lady sat down in the palace, wondering whether Pilgrim could escape with his life. Neither she nor the fiend king knew that these were specious bells. As soon as he got outside, the fiend king stood at the upper hand spot of the wind. "Pilgrim Sun," he cried out, "don't run away! Watch me shake my bells a little!"

With a laugh, Pilgrim replied, "If you've bells, you think I've none? If you can shake them, you think I can't shake them?"

"What sort of bells do you've?" said the fiend king. "Take them out for me to see." Pilgrim gave his iron rod a pinch to reduce it to the size of an embroidery needle that he stored in his ear. Then he untied from his waist those three true treasures and said to the fiend king, "Aren't these my purple-gold bells?"

Greatly startled by what he saw, the fiend king said to himself, "Odd! Very odd! How'd his bells be exactly like mine? Even if they're cast in the same mould, there ought to be some mark here or blemish there. How could they be exactly alike?" He therefore asked, "Where did your bells come from?"

"Worthy nephew," said Pilgrim, "where did yours come from?"

An honest person, the fiend king said right away, "My bells belonged originally to *lord Grand Purity, most steeped in the Way. In eight-trigram stove gold with a long stay did forge these bells now called perfected gems and left behind by Laozi till this day.*"

Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Well, the bells of old monkey also come from that time."

"Where did they come from?" asked the fiend king.

Pilgrim said, "*In Tushita Hall the Dao Patriarch hale had his stove forged these gold bells without fail. Two threes are six – cyclic treasures they are: my bells are female whereas yours are male.*"

"These bells," said the fiend king, "are treasures forged in the same process as that of the golden elixir. They are not fowl or beasts. How could you use gender to distinguish them? If you can shake something valuable out of them, then they are good treasures."

"It's useless to talk," replied Pilgrim, "when only action's the proof. I'll let you shake them first."

The fiend king indeed shook the first bell three times but no fire came out; he shook the second bell three times but no smoke came out; and he shook the third bell three times but no sand came out. Terribly flustered, the fiend king said, "How strange! How strange! The ways of the world have changed! These must be hen-pecked bells! The male sees the female and that's why nothing comes out!"

"Stop shaking, worthy nephew!" said Pilgrim. "Let me shake mine for you to see." *Marvellous monkey!* He grasped the three bells in his hand and shook them altogether. *Just look at the red fire, green smoke, and yellow sand!* They poured out together and began at once to engulf the mountain and trees. The Great Sage also recited a spell and shouted facing the ground toward the southwest, "Come, wind!"

Indeed, a strong gust whipped up the fire, and the fire exploited the power of the wind. *In flaming red and massive black, the sky was full of fire and smoke and the earth full of yellow sand.* Scared out of his wits, that Jupiter's Rival wanted to flee but could not find a way out. For in the midst of that kind of fire, how'd he possibly escape with his life?

Suddenly a loud voice came from mid-air: "Sun Wukong, I've arrived!" As he turned his head upward quickly, Pilgrim saw that it was the Nun Guanyin; her left hand was supporting the immaculate vase while her right hand was sprinkling sweet dew with her willow twig to put out the fire. Pilgrim was so startled that he quickly tucked the bells in his waist, folded his hands before his chest, and saluted low. After the Nun had sprinkled a few drops of the sweet dew, the smoke and fire all vanished in an instant and there was not a trace of the yellow sand. Respecting, Pilgrim said, "I didn't know the Great Compassion had descended to Earth, and I've caused offence by not avoiding your sacred presence. May I ask where the Nun is going?"

"I've come," replied the Nun, "especially to bring this fiend to submission."

"What was this fiend's origin," said Pilgrim, "that it should necessitate your golden form revealing itself in order to bring him to submission?" The Nun said, "He is actually the golden-haired wolf that I ride on. Because the lad who looks after him fell asleep, this cursed beast managed to bite through the iron chains and come here to dispel calamity for the king of the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom."

On hearing this, Pilgrim quickly saluted and said, "The Nun is twisting the truth! The fiend has mocked the ruler and cheated him of his queen here; he has corrupted the customs and violated the mores. He has in fact brought calamity to the ruler. How could you say that he has helped the king to dispel calamity?"

The Nun replied, "You've no idea that when the deceased king of the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom was still on the throne, the present king, then the crown-prince, was exceedingly fond of hunting when he was still young. Leading men and horses, mounting hawks and hounds, he once came before the Phoenix-Down Slope where two young birds, one male and another female, were perching. These happened to be the off springs of the Nun Great King Peacock.<sup>8</sup> When the young prince stretched his bow, he wounded the male peacock, and the female one too, returned to the West with an arrow stuck in her body. After a god Mum had pardoned him, she decreed that he should be punished by being separated from his mate for three years and that his body should be inflicted with the illness of yearning. At the time, I was riding this wolf when I heard the sentence pronounced. Little did I realise that this cursed beast would remember it and come here to abduct the queen and dispel calamity for the king. It's been three years now and his preordained chastisement has been fulfilled. You're to be thanked for arriving to heal the king and I've come especially to bring the fiend to submission."

"Nun," said Pilgrim, "the story may go like this but he has also defiled the queen, corrupted the customs, upset the relations, and perverted the law. He is worthy of death. Now that you've arrived in person, I'll spare his life but not his living punishment. Let me give him twenty strokes of my rod, and then you may take him away."

"Wukong," said the Nun, "if you appreciate my epiphany, then you must, for my sake, grant him a plenary pardon. This will be considered entirely your merit, that of bringing the fiend to submission. If you raise your rod, he will be dead!" As he dared not disobey, Pilgrim had no choice but to salute and say, "After the Nun has taken him back to South Sea, he mustn't be permitted to return in secret to the human world again, for he can cause a lot of harm."

Only then did the Nun cry out, "Cursed beast! If you don't return to your origin now, when'll you do so?" Rolling once on the ground, the fiend immediately appeared in his original form. As he shook out his furry coat, the Nun mounted his back only to discover with one look that the three bells beneath his collar were nowhere to be seen. "Wukong," said the Nun, "return my bells."

"Old monkey knows nothing about bells!" replied Pilgrim.

"You thievish ape!" snapped the Nun. "If you'd failed in stealing the bells, even ten of you'd be unable to approach him. Bring them out quickly!"

"But really, I've not seen them!" chuckled Pilgrim.

"In that case," said the Nun, "allow me to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell a little."

At once alarmed, Pilgrim could only mutter, "Don't recite! Don't recite! The bells are here!"

Thus it is that from the *wolf's collar who'll untie the bells? The 1 untying asks the 1 who ties.* After the Nun had slipped the bells back onto the collar of the wolf, she mounted his back again. *Look at him! Beneath his 4 legs lotus blossoms grow; over all his body thick golden threads glow.* The Great Compassion went back to South Sea. The Great Sage Sun having tightened his kilt, wielded the iron rod to fight his way into the Cave of the Mythic Beast and slew all the rest of the fiends. Then he went into the palace to beckon the Lady Golden Sage Palace to return to her country. The lady could not have been more grateful after Pilgrim gave her a thorough account of how the Nun had brought the fiend to submission and why she had to be separated from her mate. Then Pilgrim found some grass that he tied together to make a straw dragon. "Madam," he said, "climb on this and close your eyes. Don't be afraid. I'm taking you back to court to see your lord."

The lady followed his instruction as Pilgrim began to exercise his magic power: all she heard was the sound of the wind. In the period of half an hour they arrived at the capital. As they dropped from the clouds, he said, "Madam, please open your eyes."

The queen opened her eyes and at once those dragon towers and phoenix bowers that she readily recognised, gave her immense delight. She abandoned the straw dragon to ascend the treasure hall with Pilgrim. When the king saw her, he hurried down from the dragon couch. Taking the hand of the lady, he wanted to tell her how much he missed her when all of a sudden, he fell to the ground crying, "Oh my hand! It hurts! It hurts!"

8 Rules broke out in loud guffaws, saying, "O dear! You just don't have the luck to enjoy her. The moment you see her you're smitten to death!"

"Idiot," said Pilgrim, "you dare give her a tug?"

"What'll happen if I do?" asked 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, "The lady's body's covered with poisonous prickles, and her hands are full of vicious stings. Since she reached the Unicorn Mountain these three years, that fiend Jupiter's Rival has never claimed her body. For the moment he touched her, his body or his hands would be pained."

On hearing this, the various officials exclaimed, "What'll we do?"

So the officials outside the court became vexed and the ladies of the palace, too were alarmed. Meanwhile, Jade Sage and Silver Sage, the 2 other consorts helped the ruler to his feet. As they stood there in confusion, they heard someone calling out in mid-air, "Great Sage, I've arrived!"

Pilgrim raised his head to look and he heard *majestic crane cries in the sky as someone drifted down to court. Auspicious radiance encircling; creative auras tremulous. A coir and grass coat wrapped in cloud and mist, he trod straw sandals rarely seen. He held a fly-swat of rushes; a silk sash wound around his waist. Throughout the world he had formed human ties; footloose, he roamed all the great earth. This was the Great Heaven's Mortal Purple Cloud, bringing salvation this day to earth.*<sup>9</sup>Going forward to meet him, Pilgrim said, "Zhang Ziyang, <sup>10</sup>where're you going?"

The Realised Mortal Ziyang went before the court and saluted saying, "Great Sage, this humble mortal Zhang Boduan raises my hand to salute you."

Returning his salute, Pilgrim said, "Where've you come from?"

The realised mortal said, "Three years ago, I was on my way to a god festival when I passed through this region. When I saw that the king was destined to be separated from his mate, I feared that the fiend might defile the queen and upset the human relations, so that afterwards it would be difficult for the king and queen to be reunited.<sup>11</sup> I therefore changed an old coir coat of mine into a new shining robe, radiant in five colours, to present to the fiend king as an addition to the queen's wardrobe. The moment when she put it on, poisonous prickles sprouted on her body but actually those prickles were the transformation of the coir coat. Now that I've learned of the Great Sage's success, I've come to bring deliverance."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "we're indebted to you for coming from such a great distance. Please deliver her, quickly." The realised mortal walked forward and pointed at the lady with his finger; immediately, the coir coat came off and the lady's entire body was smooth as before. Shaking out the coat, the realised mortal draped it over himself and said to Pilgrim, "I beg your pardon, Great Sage, for this humble mortal must take leave of you."

"Please wait for a moment," replied Pilgrim, "and allow the ruler to thank you."

"No need, no need," said the mortal, laughing.

He gave a long salute and rose into the air. The king, the queen, and all the officials were so astonished that they all saluted toward the sky. Thereafter, the king gave the order for the Eastern Hall to be opened in order that the four priests might be thanked with a huge banquet. After the king led his subjects to respect to the pilgrims, he was reunited with his wife. As they drank merrily, Pilgrim said, "Master, take out that declaration of war."

The elder took it out from his sleeve to hand over to Pilgrim who passed it to the king and said, "This document's to be sent here by a junior officer of the fiend. The officer had been beaten to death by me at first and I took him here to announce my merit. When I went back to the mountain afterwards, I changed into the form of the officer to get inside the cave. That's how I got to see the lady. After I succeeded in stealing the golden bells, I was almost caught by the fiend. Then I'd to undergo transformation to steal the bells again. When he fought with me, it's my fortune that the Nun Guanyin arrived and brought him to submission. She also told me of the reason why you and your queen had to be separated." After he gave a thorough account of what had taken place, the king and all his subjects were full of gratitude and praise. "It's the great good fortune of a worthy ruler in the first place," said the Tang Monk, "and it's also the merit of our humble disciple. This lavish banquet you've given us is perfection indeed! We must salute to take leave of you now. Don't delay this humble cleric's journey to the West." Having failed to persuade the priests to stay longer even with earnest pleading, the king had the rescript certified. Then he asked the Tang Monk to take a seat in the imperial chariot while he and his consorts pushed it with their own hands to send the pilgrim out of the capital before they parted. Truly *1's anxious ailment's purged with affinity; 1's mind is at peace without thought or desire.*

Tripitaka took leave of the king of the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom and proceeded westward on his horse. He passed over numerous mountains and forded countless waterways. Soon, autumn departed and even winter faded, and it was again the bright, attractive season of spring. As master and disciples stepped on the green and enjoyed the scenery, they came upon some houses shaded by trees.

Rolling over on his saddle, Tripitaka dismounted and stood by the main road. "Master," asked Pilgrim, "why aren't you moving on when this road's so level and smooth?"

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you're quite insensitive! Master must be rather tired of sitting on the horse. You can let him get down to catch his breath a little."

"I'm not trying to catch my breath," said Tripitaka, "but I see that there's a household over there. I'd like to go and beg some maigre for us to eat."

"Look at the way Master speaks!" said Pilgrim, smiling. "If you want to eat, I'll go and do the begging. As the proverb says, 'Once a teacher, always a dad.' How could the disciples remain seated while the master goes to beg for food?"

"It's not like that," replied Tripitaka. "Usually we look out into the endless horizon, and regardless of how far you've to travel, you go to beg for food. Today, there's a household nearby, close enough for me to call you if I need help. You'd therefore let me go and do the begging."

"But Master," said 8 Rules, "you're not thinking properly. As the proverb says, 'When three persons go out, the youngest child suffers.' You belong to the paternal generation, and all of us are your disciples. As an ancient text says, 'When there's any hard work to be undertaken, the young must do it.'<sup>1</sup> Let Old bull go."

"O disciples," said Tripitaka, "today the weather's fair and bright, unlike the times of wind and rain. In those days, you'll, of course, do it, even if you've to cover great distances. Let me go now to this household; when I find out whether there's food or not, we'll leave."

"Elder Brothers," said Sand-monk, smiling on one side, "no need to talk further. Master's temperament's like that and you need not contradict him. If you offend him, he'll not eat the food even if you succeed in begging it."

8 Rules agreed and took out the alms-bowl for him. After Tripitaka changed his hat and cloak, he strode up to the village to look around. It was quite a nice dwelling. See a stone bridge arching up; aged trees thick and neat. Where the stone bridge arches up, gurgling water flows to meet a long brook; where aged trees are thick and neat, the chirps of hidden birds reach distant hills. On the bridge's other side are a few thatched huts, quaint and elegant like a mortal shrine; there is also a window overlaid with reeds that make it seem clearly a Daoist home. Before the window four lovelies appear, all stitching phoenixes and doing needlework. When the elder saw that there was no man but only 4 young women in the house, he dared not enter. He stood still beneath the trees and found that each one of them seemed to have an orchid nature fine like spring, a womanly mind firm as stone. Pink hues adorned her lovely face; her rouged lips were most smoothly done. Her moth brows were slanted crescents; her hair piled up a cobweb bun. If she stood among the flowers, the bees would mistake her for 1. He waited there for at least half an hour but the whole place was quiet without even a sound from chickens or dogs. He thought to himself: If I truly don't have the ability to beg a meal, I'll make my disciples laugh at me. They'll dare say, if the master couldn't even succeed in begging food, how'd the disciples go and worship God?

The elder could not think of a better alternative; though he knew perhaps he should not proceed, he nonetheless walked up the bridge. After he had taken several steps, he could see that there was within the courtyard of the thatched hut a small pavilion made of sandalwood. Inside the pavilion, there were 3 other young women kicking a ball filled with air. Look at these 3 girls who were quite different from the other 4. See halcyon blue sleeves fluttering; light yellow skirts swaying. Halcyon blue sleeves fluttering enshroud dainty, jade-white fingers. Light yellow skirts swaying half reveal shoes slender and shapely. Their postures and styles are perfection all; moving or still, their heels take many forms. To pass overhead they must gauge the height; the long pass must be accurate and true. A turning kick is Flower beyond the Wall; backing up becomes Traversing the Sea. Trapping gently a lump of dirt; charging alone to tackle legs. When A Pearl Ascends God's Head, <sup>3</sup>they seize and separate with the toe. They can pick up a slender brick; kick, bending back, their feet arched. They squat with a straight torso; twist and kick with their heels. Knees bent they can call for a pass, <sup>4</sup>their shoulders swing like donning capes. Through the legs the ball freely goes or it loops and swings round the neck. They kick like the Yellow River flowing upstream or like gold fishes beached on the sand. <sup>5</sup>That one by mistake thinks it is the head; this one whirling bumps at once the waist. Firmly the ball's held by the calf; squarely they slam with their toes. Heels lifted, straw sandals fall; scissor kicks send backward the prize. Step back for the shoulder-pass style; the hairpin only once goes awry. As the hamper-like net hangs low, they will then kick toward the gate. <sup>6</sup>When the ball hits squarely the goal, all the fair ladies shout, "Bravo!" So, each one's silk gowns is sweat-soaked and her makeup's messy; only when zeal's all spent will they cry enough. We can't end the description; therefore we offer also another testimonial poem. The poem says: <sup>7</sup>

*3<sup>rd</sup> month's the time they kick ball in a field, these fair ones blown down by mortal wind.  
Their faces perspire like flowers bedewed; dusty moth brows are willows in mist.  
Shrouding their fingers, the blue sleeves hang low; light yellow skirts awlirl, they show their feet.  
They finish their kicking all faint and fair with jewels askew and dishevelled hair.*

Tripitaka watched them until he could no longer tarry. He had to walk up to the arch of the bridge and call out in a loud voice, "Nuns, this humble cleric has come here to beg for whatever amount of food you care to give me." When they heard his voice, all the girls abandoned their needlework and their ball. Smiling broadly, they came out of the door to say, "Elder, pardon us for not coming to meet you first when you arrived at our rustic village. Since we dare not feed a priest by the wayside, please take a seat inside."

On hearing this, Tripitaka thought to himself, "My goodness! My goodness! The West is truly the land of a god. If women are concerned to feed the priests, how could men not revere a god?" The elder walked forward and saluted before he followed the girls into the thatched hut. After they passed the pavilion made of sandalwood, he looked around. Ah! There were actually neither rooms nor corridors, only towering summits, extensive ranges. Towering summits that touch the cloud and mist; extensive ranges that Reach Sea and isle. The door's near a stone bridge, borne by flowing water of nine twists and turns; the yard's planted with plums and peaches, vying for splendour with a thousand stalks and fruits. Vines and creepers dangle from several trees; orchid spreads its scent through ten thousand flowers. From afar the cave seems better than Isle Peng; up close the mountain and woods surpass Mount Flower's. It's the bogus mortals' reclusive place; no other household takes its neighbouring space. 1 of the girls walked forward, pushed open 2 stone doors, and asked the Tang Monk to take a seat inside. The elder had little alternative but to walk inside where he discovered no other furniture but stone tables and benches. It was dark, and the air seemed to have turned very chilly all of a sudden. Becoming alarmed, the elder thought to himself, "This place betokens more evil than good. It's not a nice place at all."

Still all smiles, the girls said, "Please be seated, elder."

The elder had no choice but to sit down and after a while, he was so cold that he began to shiver. "From which monastery did you come, elder?" asked 1 of the girls. "What sort of alms are you seeking? To repair bridges, roads, build a monastery, a pagoda, or fund a festival and print scriptures? Please take out your alms-book for us to see."

"I'm not a priest begging for alms," replied the elder.

"If you're not," said the girl, "why've you come here?"

The elder said, "I'm someone sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go to the Great Thunderclap in the Western Heaven to acquire scriptures. Passing through your honoured region, I became hungry and that's the reason for my approaching your lovely mansion. After I've begged a meal from you, I'll leave."

"Fine! Fine! Fine!" said the girls. "As the proverb says, *Monks coming from afar can read Threads better*. Sisters, we mustn't slight our guest. Let's prepare a vegetarian meal quickly."

At that time, 3 of the girls kept the elder company by speaking with him rather animatedly on the subject of karma. 4 of the girls however, rolled up their sleeves and dashed into the kitchen where they added fire and scrubbed the pans. They prepared human flesh sautéed and fried in human lard until black enough that it could pass for pieces of fried wheat gluten. They also pan-fried some freshly gouged human brains that they then cut up to look like pieces of bean curd. 2 dishes of these they took out to set on the stone table and said to the elder, "Please eat. We've been unable to prepare a good vegetarian meal for you in such a hurry. But do eat some food to relieve your hunger; there's more of it in the back."

Taking a whiff of the dishes, the elder clamped his mouth shut when he found the food to be so stinky and putrid. He rose and saluted with hands folded, saying, "Nuns, this humble cleric's kept a vegetarian diet since his birth."

"Elder," replied one of the girls, laughing, "These're vegetarian dishes."

"Infinite Light!" cried the elder. "If I, a priest partake of such vegetarian dishes, I'll never get to see the World-Honoured One or acquire the scriptures."

"Elder," said the girl, "you're someone who's left the home. You'd never be choosy with your patrons!"

"Would I dare? Would I dare?" said the elder. "Since this priest received the decree of the Great Tang to go west, he's not destroyed even the tiniest creature and tried to relieve suffering wherever he sees it. I feed myself, picking up grain by grain; I clothe myself, knitting threads one by one. How'd I dare be choosy with my patrons?"

"Though you may not be choosy with your patrons, elder," said another girl, laughing, "you're not afraid to put the blame on people after walking in the door. Don't despise the coarse and the unseasoned. Eat a little, please!"

"Indeed, I daren't," replied the elder, "for I fear I may break the commandment. To nourish a life is not as good as delivering a life, nuns. Please let me go."

The elder tried to struggle out of the door but the girls barred the way, refusing, of course, to let him go. "A business right at our door," they cried, "and you expect us not to do it? 'You want to cover up a fart with your hand? Where do you think you're going?' All of them knew a little martial art, and they were also quite dexterous with their hands and feet. Grabbing the elder, they yanked him forward like a sheep and flung him to the ground. He was pinned down by all of them, trussed up with ropes, and pulled over a crossbeam to be hung up high. The way in which he was hung in fact had a name to it: it was called "Mortal Pointing the Way." One of his arms was stretched forward and suspended by a rope; the other arm was tied up alongside the body, and the rope was then used to hang up the midsection. His two legs were bound together and hung up by a third rope. The elder thus dangled face-down from the crossbeam, held by three ropes. Racked by pain, his eyes brimming with tears, the elder thought morosely to himself, "How bitter is the fate of this priest! I thought that I'd beg a meal from a good family but I landed in a fiery pit instead! O disciples, come quickly to save me, and we'll be able still to see each other again. Two more hours and my life will be finished!"

Though the elder was sorely distressed, he nonetheless was also observing the girls carefully. After they had tied and hung him up properly, they began to take off their clothes. Greatly alarmed, the elder thought to himself, "They're disrobing because they want to beat me or may want to devour me." But the girls were only taking off their upper garments. After they had their bellies exposed, they began to exercise their magic power. Out from their navels poured coils of thread with the thickness of a duck egg; like bursting jade and flying silver, the threads had the entire village gate covered up in a moment. Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk, all waiting by the wayside. 2 of them were watching the luggage and grazing the horse but Pilgrim, always the mischievous one, was leaping from branch to branch as he picked the leaves and searched for fruits. He chanced to turn his head toward the direction his master had gone and saw all at once a mass of light. So alarmed was he that he leaped down from the tree shouting, "It's bad! It's bad! Master's luck's turning rotten!" Then he pointed with his fingers and said to his companions, "Look what happened to that village!" 8 Rules and Sand-monk stared at the place and saw the mass of light bright as snow and shiny as silver. "Finished! Finished!" cried 8 Rules. "Master must have run into monster-spirits! Let's go rescue him, quickly!"

"Don't shout, Worthy Brother," said Pilgrim, "for you've not seen the truth of the matter. Let old monkey go up there."

"Be careful, Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, and Pilgrim replied, "I know what to do."

Dear Great Sage! Tightening up his tiger-skin skirt and whipping out his golden-hooped rod, he bounded up there in two or three leaps. There he discovered a dense mass of cords that had to be a thousand layers thick, weaving up and down in a web-like pattern. He touched the cords with his hand, and they felt soft and sticky. Not knowing quite what it was, Pilgrim lifted his iron rod and said to himself, "One blow of my rod can surely snap ten thousand layers of this thing, let alone a thousand layers!" He was about to strike when he stopped and thought to himself some more: "I can snap something hard but this is quite soft. All I can do probably is to flatten it a little. But if I disturb whatever it is, it may have Old monkey all tangled up, and that'll not be good. Let me ask a few questions first before I strike."

He would question. He made the magic sign and recited a spell that had the immediate effect of causing an old local spirit to walk round and round in his shrine as if he were turning a millstone. His wife said to him, "Oldie, why are you spinning round and round? Is your epilepsy acting up?"

"You'd not know about this! You'd not know about this!" cried the local spirit. "There's here a Great Sage Equal to Heaven. I've not gone to meet him, and now he's summoning me."

"Go and see him then," said his wife. "What are you spinning around here for?"

"If I go see him," replied the local spirit, "I'll have to see his heavy rod also. Without regard for good or ill, he'll strike at me."

His wife said, "When he sees how old you're, he'll not strike you."

The local spirit said, "All his life, *he loves to drink juice free and beat old folks specially!*"

The two of them thus chatted for a while but he could find no other alternative than to walk out of the shrine. Trembling all over, he went to his knees by the road and called out, "Great Sage, the local spirit of this region respects to you."

"Get up," said Pilgrim, "and don't look so harried without a reason. I'm not going to beat you, I'll just leave it standing on your account. Let me ask you, what is this place?"

"Where did the Great Sage come from?" asked the local spirit.

"We're going to the West from the Land of the East," replied Pilgrim.

The local spirit said, "Did the Great Sage pass through a mountain ridge?"

"We're still up there," said Pilgrim. "Can't you see our horse and luggage over there?"

"That," said the local spirit, "is the Cobweb Ridge, beneath which is a Cobweb Cave. There are seven monster-spirits inside the cave."

"Are they male or female fiends?" asked Pilgrim.

The local spirit said, "Female."

"What sort of magic powers do they possess?" asked Pilgrim again.

The local spirit said, "This humble deity has little strength or authority, and he can't determine what sort of abilities they may have. I only know that three miles due south of here, there's a Purgation Spring that is a natural hot spring. Originally, it was the bathing place for the Seven Mortal Dames of the Region Above. Since the monster-spirits arrived, they took over the Purgation Spring, and the Mortal Dames did not even bother to contend with them. They simply let the monster-spirits have the place. If then even *heaven's gods did not pick with these fiends a fight, such spirits had to have great magic might.*"

"Why did the monster-spirits want the spring?" asked Pilgrim.

The local spirit said, "After these fiends took it over, they bathed in it three times a day. They did once already today during the Hour of the Serpent® and they would come back again by noon."

On hearing this, Pilgrim said, "Local spirit, you may go back. Let me catch them by myself." After respecting 1 more time, the local spirit still trembling, went back to his own shrine. Great Sage all alone now exercised his magic power; with a shake of his body he changed into a tiny fly, alighted on a blade of grass by the road, and waited. In a moment, all he heard was loud breathing noises *like silkworms devouring leaves and tide rising from the sea*. In approximately the time it took to drink half a glass of tea, all the threads disappeared and the village came into sight once more as before. Then he heard the wooden gates open with a creak, and loud, laughing chatter brought out seven young women. As Pilgrim stared at them secretly, he saw that all of them walked side by side and hand in hand. Laughing and joking, they proceeded to cross the bridge. *Some beauties indeed! They appeared to be jade-like but far more fragrant; flower-like but their words were real. Willow brows arched like distant hills; scented mouths framed by cherry lips. Kingfisher plumes rose on hair pins; small feet gleamed beneath crimson skirts. They seemed like Change coasting to the world below and mortals going down to earth.* "No wonder my master wanted to beg a meal at this place!" chuckled Pilgrim to himself. "So there're such lovely creatures around here. If my master's kept by these seven beauties, he'll not even make one meal for them, nor be able to last for two days if they use him. If they take turns to handle him, he'll die on the spot. Let me eavesdrop on them and see what they plan to do." *Dear Great Sage!*

With a buzz, he flew off and alighted on one of the hair buns. After they crossed the bridge, 1 of the girls walking behind called out to those up front, "Elder Sisters, let's go back and have that fat monk steamed for food after we take our bath."

"This fiendish creature's," chuckled Pilgrim to himself, "so headless! Boiling will save them some firewood. Why does she want him steamed?" Picking flowers and fencing with blades of grass as they headed south, those girls soon arrived at the bathing pool that was enclosed by a magnificent wall. *Wildflowers lushly fragrant covered the ground; on all sides were orchids both fresh and dense. The girl in the back walked forward and pushed open 2 doors with a loud crack; inside there was indeed a large pool of hot water. At the time of creation, the original number of suns was set at 10. <sup>9</sup>Later Hou Yi, the archer stretched his salute and shot down 9 of these suns, leaving only 1 sun behind, the true fire of supreme yang. There are 9 hot springs in the world, all transformations of the former suns. These magic springs of yang are: Fragrant-Cold, Mountain-Mate, Hot, Eastern-Fusion, Mountain-Flooding, Filial-Peace, Wide-Whirling, and Torrid. This is the Purgation Spring.* Also a testimonial poem says:

*1 climate without heat or cold even in autumn it's ever spring.  
Hot ripples like a boiling cauldron's; snowy waves like newly made soup.  
Spilling out it warms the crops; still body washes our dust.  
Its bubbles seem like swelling tears; it churns like jade liquefied.  
Such moisture's never brewed; self-heated, it's clear and smooth.*

*A good sign of auspicious land, truly it's Heaven's creation where beauties wash their smooth and ice-white skins: all dirt removed, their jade-like frames renewed.*

This bathing pool was about fifty feet wide and over one hundred feet long. Inside, it was about four feet deep, the water being so clear that one could see to the bottom. A jet of water like rolling pearls and swelling jade continued to bubble up from the base and there were on all 4 sides some 6 or 7 outlets for the water to drain. By the time it reached some rice paddies 2 or 3 miles away, the water would still be warm. Adjacent to the pool were 3 small pavilions; behind the middle 1 was placed a 5-legged bench on both ends of which there were also colour lacquered garment racks. Secretly delighted by what he saw, Pilgrim spread his wings and landed with a buzz on 1 of those racks. Seeing how warm and clear the water was, the girls immediately wanted to bathe in it. They took off their clothes, put them on the racks, and leaped into the pool together. Pilgrim saw them *undoing their buttons and clasps, untying their sashes of silk. Their bosoms were white like silver; bodies all resembled snow. Their limbs appeared gilded in ice; shoulders seemed kneaded with dough. Their bellies looked soft and yielding; backs were both shiny and smooth. Their knees and wrists were round and small; feet, no wider than 3 inches. Desire ringed their midsections showing their apertures of love.* After jumping into the pool, the girls began to leap and bounce on the water as they swam and frolicked. *If I want to hit them, thought Pilgrim to himself, all I've to do is to stick my rod in the pool and give it a stir. That's called: pouring hot water on the rats, you wipe out the entire nest. Pity! Pity! I can kill them all right but old monkey's fame will diminish somewhat. As the proverb says, a man doesn't fight with a woman. A fellow like me would look rather feckless if I beat to death a few of these scullions. No, I'll not strike at them. I'll devise a plan that'll make them unable to move. That ought to do some good. Dear Great Sage!* Making the magic sign and reciting a spell, he changed with 1 shake of his body into an old, hungry hawk. *See feathers like snow, frost, and eyes bright as the stars. Seeing him, the fiendish fox loses its wits; meeting him, the wily hare's terrified. Steel-like claws gleaming and quick make his looks fierce and heroic. He uses his old fists to serve his mouth, ready to chase himself all things that fly. He soars through vast stretches of frigid air, boring clouds, grasping things without a care.* With a flap of his wings, the hawk flew up to the pavilion, stretched out his sharp claws, and picked the racks clean of the 7 suits of clothing left draping there before darting back to the ridge where he changed into his original form to meet 8 Rules and Sand-monk. *Look at Idiot now!*

He met Pilgrim and said, laughing, "So Master's been imprisoned in a pawn shop!"

"How do you know?" asked Sand-monk.

"Don't you see," said 8 Rules, "that Elder Brother has robbed it of all its clothing?"

Putting them down, Pilgrim said, "These are things worn by monster-spirits."

"How could there be so many?" asked 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, "There are seven suits altogether."

"How could you strip them so easily," asked 8 Rules, "and so well?"

"I didn't need to," replied Pilgrim. "This place's called the Cobweb Ridge and that village actually bears the name of Cobweb Cave. Inside the cave are seven girls who having captured our master and hung him up, went to take a bath in the Purgation Spring. That spring's actually a hot spring formed by Heaven and Earth. After they took their baths, the monster-spirits were planning to steam Master for food. I followed them there and when I saw them disrobing and getting into the water, I wanted to strike at them. But I feared that I might soil my rod and lower my reputation and that's why I didn't move my rod. Instead, I changed into a hungry, old hawk and grabbed all of their clothing. Too embarrassed to leave the pool, they just squatted in the water. Let's go quickly to untie Master and we can be on our way."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules with a chuckle, "whenever you do anything, you always leave something behind. If you've seen monster-spirits, how'd you not kill them and want instead to go untie Master? Though they're too embarrassed to leave the pool now, they'll come out once it's night. They must've some old clothes at home that they can put on and then chase us down. Even if they don't chase us, they can remain here and after we've acquired the scriptures, we'll have to take this road back. As the proverb says, *rather give up your travel expenses; never lack what your fist dispenses.* If they bar our way and give us trouble by the time we return from the West, we'll meet up with enemies, won't we?"

"What do you want to do then?" asked Pilgrim.

"As I see it," said 8 Rules, "we must first slay the monster-spirits before we go untie Master. This is the plan of *mowing the grass by rooting it out.*"

"I don't want to strike at them," said Pilgrim. "If you do, you go ahead."

Elated with delight, 8 Rules held high his muckrake and ran up to the pool with big strides. After he pushed open the doors to look, he found those seven girls all squatting in the water and casting abusive profanities at the hawk, shouting, "That flattened-hair beast! That wretched outcast! May a big cat gnaw on his head! He seized our clothes! How'd we move?"

"Nuns," said 8 Rules, hardly able to contain his giggles, "so you're taking a bath here. How about asking a priest like me to join you?"

When they saw him, the fiends became angry. "You're a very rude priest!" they cried. "We're women in a home and you're a man who's left the home. The ancient book said: *By the seventh year, a man and a woman aren't to sit on the same mat.* <sup>10</sup>How'd you bathe in the same pool with us?"

"It's so hot now," said 8 Rules, "that there's no alternative. Don't be so fussy and let me wash with you. Stop throwing the book at me! What's all this about sitting and not sitting on the same mat!"

Refusing to permit any further discussion, Idiot abandoned his rake, took off his black silk shirt, and leaped into the water with a splash. More incensed than ever, the fiends rushed forward and wanted to hit him. Little did they know that 8 Rules could be extremely agile once he landed in water. With a shake of his body he changed at once into a sheet fish spirit. All the fiends reached for him with their hands and tried to catch the fish; but as they dove toward him in the east, he darted to the west with a swoosh, and when they plunged their hands down in the west, he spurted to the east once more. All slimy and slippery, he darted madly between their legs. The water was about chest deep; after 8 Rules swam around on top of the water for a while, he dove straight for the bottom, so tiring the fiends that they all collapsed, panting, in the pool. Only then did 8 Rules leap out of the pool, change back into his original form, put on his shirt, and take up his muckrake once more. "Who do you think I'm?" he bellowed. "Just a sheet fish spirit?"

When they saw him, the fiends were terrified. "You're the priest who came in just now," said 1 of them. "You changed into a sheet fish when you leaped into the water and we'd not catch hold of you. Now you look like this again. Where in fact did you come from? You must give us your name."

"So you bunch of lawless fiends really don't recognise me!" said 8 Rules. "I'm the disciple of the Tang elder, someone from the Great Tang in the Land of the East who's on his way to acquire scriptures. I'm Bullseye Aware of Abilities Eight Rules, the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. You've my master hung up in a cave and are planning to have him steamed for food. *My master!* Steamed for food? Stretch out your heads at once and receive a blow, each of you. I want to finish you off!"

When they heard these words, the fiends were frightened out of their wits. Going to their knees in the water, they cried, "We beg the Venerable Dad to forgive us. We've eyes but no pupils and caught your master by mistake. Though he's hanging there now, he's not been tortured. Please spare our lives in your mercy. We're willing to give you some travel money instead to send your master to the Western Heaven."

Waving his hand, 8 Rules replied, "Don't talk like that! The proverb's put the matter very well: *once the candy salesman did me deceive, I'd never the sweet talker believe.* No matter what, I'm going to give you a blow of my rake. Then each of us can be on our way!"

As he had always been rather crude and rough, more intent on displaying his power than on showing pity and tenderness to women, Idiot lifted up his rake and without further regard for good or ill, rushed forward to attack them. Terribly flustered, the fiends were no longer concerned with embarrassment than with the far more important matter of preserving their lives. Shielding their private parts with their hands, they leaped out of the water and stood by the pavilions to exercise their magic. All at once the threads began to pour out of their navels, and in no time at all, 8 Rules was enclosed inside what appeared to be a huge silk tent. Discovering, when he raised his head, that the sky and the sun had suddenly disappeared, Idiot wanted to run away but alas, he could hardly even take a step! All over the ground ropes and cords were strewn to trip him up. The moment he moved his legs, he began to stumble: he headed to the left and his face hugged the ground; he went to the right and he fell head over heels; he turned around and his horn kissed the earth; he scrambled up only to do a handstand. He tumbled over countless times until his body turned numb and his legs flaccid, until his head swam and his eyes could not see straight. Unable even to crawl, all he could do was lie on the ground and moan. After the fiends had him trapped like that, they did not beat him or harm him in any way. Leaping out of the door of the pool, they ran back to the cave instead, using the cobweb as a shelter. Having passed the stone bridge, they stood still and recited the magic spell again to retrieve the web. Then they darted into the caves, all naked, and ran past the Tang Monk, giggling and still covering their private parts with their hands. After they took out some old clothes to put on from 1 of the stone chambers, they went to the rear door and cried, "Children, where're you?" Each of the monster-spirits had an adopted son, their names being Bee, Hornet, Cockroach, Cantharis, Grasshopper, Maggot, and Dragonfly. Those monster-spirits once set up a huge web to have these 7 insects captured and were about to devour them. But as the ancients said: *Fowl have fowl talk, and beasts have beast language.* The insects pleaded for their lives, declaring their willingness to honour their captors as mums. From that time since, *they picked 100 spring flowers to serve the fiends and searched out summer plants to feed monster-spirits.* When the insects now heard the summons, they immediately gathered before the monster-spirits to say, "Mums, why did you send for us?"

"Sons," replied the fiends, "earlier this morning we provoked by mistake a priest who came from the Tang court. His disciple just now had us trapped in the pool; not only were we put to dreadful shame but we almost lost our lives also. You must exert your strength and go out to make him turn back. If you prevail, you may then go to your uncle's house to meet us." And so, having escaped with their lives, the fiends went to their elder brother's house where their damnable mouths would stir up greater calamity, and where we'll leave them for the moment. Look at those insects! Rubbing their hands and fists eagerly, they all went forth to battle their enemy. 8 Rules grew faint and dizzy from all those falls. After a while however, he managed to raise his head a little and found that all the cords and

threads had disappeared. He scrambled up rather cautiously; taking a step at a time and nursing his pain, he found his way back. When he saw Pilgrim, he tugged at him and said, “Elder Brother, is my face swollen and bruised?”

“What happened to you?” asked Pilgrim.

8 Rules replied, “I was completely covered up by cords and threads that those fiends let out. They even had tripping tethers set up on the ground. I don’t know how many times I fell but my torso went limp and my back was about to break, unable to move even a single step. I got my life back and returned here only because the ropes and cords disappeared after a while.” When he heard that, Sand-monk cried, “Finished! Finished! You’ve caused a disaster! Those fiends must have gone to the cave to harm Master. Let’s go quickly to rescue him!”

On hearing this, Pilgrim began to run toward the village, followed by 8 Rules pulling the horse. When they arrived at the stone bridge, their way was barred by seven little fiends who cried, “Slow down! Slow down! We’re here!” Taking a look at them, Pilgrim said to himself, “How laughable! They’re all so tiny! Even the tallest is no more than two and a half feet, and the heaviest can’t be more than ten pounds.” He then bellowed at them, “Who are you?”

The fiends replied, “We’re the sons of the seven mortal dames. You’ve insulted our mums and now dare even fight up to our door. Don’t run away! Look out for yourself!” *Dear fiendish creatures!*

They rushed forward and mounted a wild attack. 8 Rules was already sorely annoyed by his falls; when he saw how tiny those insects were, he grew vicious and began to strike out with his rake. When those fiends saw how savage 8 Rules was, each of them changed back into his original form and flew up into the air crying, “Change!”

Instantly 1 changed into 10, 10 into 100, 100 into 1000, and 1000 into 10000 – there were in no time at all countless insects. *See the sky full of flying maggots, the ground covered by dragonflies; bees, hornets, diving at your heads; cockroaches going for your eyes. Cantharides bite your front, back, grasshoppers your crown, and feet. A huge, black mass striking your face, its chirr would gods and spirits faze.*

Alarmed, 8 Rules said, “O Elder Brother, they may say that scriptures are easy to get but on the road to the West, even insects bully people!”

“Brother,” said Pilgrim, “don’t be afraid. Go and attack them quickly!”

“My face, my head,” cried 8 Rules, “all over my body, there must be over ten layers of them! How am I going to attack them?”

“It’s nothing! It’s nothing!” cried Pilgrim. “I’ve my abilities!”

“O Elder Brother,” cried Sand-monk, “whatever ability you’ve, bring it out! My bald head’s swollen from their bites!”

Dear Great Sage! He pulled off a bunch of hair and chewed them to pieces before spitting them, crying, “Change! Yellow, spar…”

“Elder Brother,” interrupted 8 Rules, “what sort of street talk are you using again? Yellow? Spar?”

“You don’t realise,” replied Pilgrim, “that yellow means yellow hawk and spar is the sparrow-hawk. We’ve also the kite, the gerfalcon, the eagle, the fish-hawk, and the harrier. Those sons of the monster-spirits are seven kinds of insect, and my hairs have changed into seven kinds of hawk.” The hawks, of course, were most able to peck at insects; one peck of their bills and a whole insect was devoured. They attacked also with their claws, and they knocked the insects down with their wings. Soon the insects were eliminated; not a trace of them could be found in the air but there was over a foot of their corpses on the ground.

The three brothers then raced past the bridge to go into the cave where they found their old master suspended from the beam and weeping. “Master,” said 8 Rules, walking up to him, “because you wanted to be hung for fun in here, you’ve made me fall who knows how many times!” Sand-monk said, “Let’s untie Master first before we say anything more.” Pilgrim at once had the rope cut and lowered his master. “Where did the monster-spirits go?” he asked. The Tang Monk said, “They ran to the back, all naked, to call for their sons.”

“Brothers,” said Pilgrim, “come with me to go look for them.”

Holding their weapons, the three of them searched in vain for the fiends in the rear garden, even after they had climbed some of the peach and pear trees. “They are gone! They are gone!” said 8 Rules. Sand-monk said, “No need to look for them anymore. We’d go and wait on Master.” The brothers returned to the front to ask the Tang Monk to mount up. “You two take Master out first,” said 8 Rules. “Let Old bull use my rake on their residence so that they’ll have no place to live if they return.”

“Using your rake is a waste of strength,” chuckled Pilgrim. “Why don’t you find some firewood and you’ll finish everything off for them.” *Dear Idiot!* He indeed located some rotted pine, broken bamboo, dried willow, and dead creepers; he started a fire and soon the entire cave-dwelling was burned to the ground. Master and disciples then felt more at ease to proceed. *Aha!*

**089**

**Passions, because of old enmity, beget calamity; demon-trapped, the Mind Lord with luck breaks the light**

The Great Sage Sun supported the Tang Monk to proceed on the main road to the West with 8 Rules and Sand-monk. In a little while however, they came upon some towered buildings with palatial features and ornaments. Reining in his horse, the Tang Monk said, “Disciples, can you tell what sort of a place that’s?”

Raising his head to look, Pilgrim saw *mountains ringing the buildings; a brook rounding the arbours; a dense variety of trees before the door; most fragrant wild flowers outside the house. An egret resting in the willows seemed like jade immaculate in the mist; an oriole reciting amidst the peach appeared as brilliant gold within the flames. Wild deer in pairs trod on green grass without a thought or care; mountain fowl by 2s flew and chattered high above the red wood tips. Truly it seemed like Liu and Ruan’s Mount-Tai cave, ’a fairy haunt, a mortal’s house no less.*

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “that’s neither the residence of kings or dukes nor a house of the noble or the rich. It looks rather like a Daoist Abbey or a Religious monastery, and we’ll know for sure when we get there.” On hearing this, Tripitaka whipped his horse forward. As they arrived before the door, master and disciples discovered a stone plaque mounted on the door that had on it the inscription:

Yellow Flower Abbey

Tripitaka dismounted. 8 Rules said, “A Yellow Flower Abbey’s to be the home of a Daoist. It might be good for us to go in and meet him. Our attire may be different but we follow the same practices of austerity.”

“You’re right,” said Sand-monk. “We can go in and enjoy the scenery a bit in the first place and can also graze and feed the horse in the second. If it’s convenient, we can ask them to prepare some food for Master to eat.” The elder agreed and the four of them went inside. On both sides of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-level door was mounted the following new year couplet:

*Yellow sprout, white snow<sup>2</sup> – a mortal’s house;*

*Jasper grass, jade flowers – a feathered one’s<sup>3</sup> home.*

“This,” said Pilgrim, chuckling, “is a can-carrying Daoist who burns rushes, refines herbs, and works the fire in the reaction vessels.”

Giving him a pinch, Tripitaka said, “Be careful with your words! Be careful with your words! We’re not acquaintances or relatives of his and staying here temporarily. Why’d we mind what he’s doing?”

He had not quite finished the sentence when they went through the second-level door. The main hall was entirely closed up but in the east corridor they saw a Daoist sitting there and making drugs and pills. He was attired as such: *He wore a lacquered gold cap of scintillating red and a dark, long robe of luminous black. He trod on cloud-patterned shoes of spreading green; he knotted a Master Lü sash of swaying yellow. His face seemed like an iron gourd; his eyes shone like bright stars. His nose loomed up like a Muslim’s; his lips curled outward like a Tartar’s. Thunderbolts lay hidden in his Daoist mind, taming tigers and dragons, a true feathered 1.*

Seeing him, Tripitaka said in a loud voice, “Old mortal, this humble cleric salutes you.” Jerking up his head and startled by the sight, the Daoist abandoned the drugs in his hands, pressed down his hair pin hurriedly, tidied his clothes, and walked down the steps to say, “Old master, forgive me for not coming to meet you. Please be seated inside.”

Delighted, the elder went up to the main hall; pushing open the door, he saw the sacred images of the Three Pure Ones, before which were urns and incense laid out on a long sacrificial table. The elder took up several sticks of incense and stuck them into the urns. Only after he had saluted three times to the images did he greet the Daoist once more and took the guest seats with his disciples. The Daoist called for tea to be served at once whereupon two young lads rushed inside to look for the tea tray, to wash out the tea cups, to scrub the tea spoons, and to prepare tea fruits. All their scurrying about soon disturbed those several faced enemies.

The seven female fiends of the Cobweb Cave were once schoolmates of this Daoist when they studied the magic arts together. After they had put on the old clothes and given instruction to their adopted sons, they came to this place. At this moment, they were cutting up cloth for clothes when they saw the lads busily preparing tea. “Lads,” they asked, “who are the guests who have arrived that send you into such a frenzy?”

“Four monks walked in just now,” replied the lads, “and Master asked for tea to be served at once.”

“Was there a white, stout-ish priest?” asked one of the female fiends. “Yes,” they replied. “Another one with long horn and huge ears?” she asked again. “Yes,” they replied. “Go take the tea outside quickly,” said the female fiend, “and wink to your master as you do so. Ask him to come in, for I’ve something important to tell him.”

The divine lads indeed took five cups of tea out to the main hall; smoothing out his clothes, the Daoist picked up a cup and presented it with both hands to Tripitaka. Then he served 8 Rules, Sand-monk, and Pilgrim. After tea, the cups were collected, and as they did so, one of the lads winked at the Daoist. At once he arose and said, “Please be seated all of you. Lads, put away the trays and keep our guests company. I’ll be back soon.”

The master and his disciples went outside of the hall with one lad to enjoy the scenery. The Daoist went back to the abbot chamber where he found those seven girls all going to their knees and saying, “Elder Brother! Elder Brother! Listen to what your sisters have to say.” Raising them with his hands, the Daoist said, “When you first came, you told me already that you wanted to speak to me. It just so happened that the drugs I was preparing today had to avoid being exposed to females, and that was why I didn’t respond. Now there are guests outside. Can we talk later?”

The fiends said, “What we’ve to tell you, Elder Brother, can be told only with the arrival of your guests. When they leave, there’ll be no need for us to tell you anymore.”

“Look at the way my worthy sisters speak!” said the Daoist with a chuckle. “What do you mean that it can be told only when the guests are here? Are you mad? Let’s not say that I’m one of those who cultivates the art of mortality in purity and quiescence. Even if I were a profane person burdened with the care of wife, children, and other domestic affairs, I’d still have to wait for the guests to leave before I took care of my own business. How could you be so ill-behaved and cause me such embarrassment? Let me go out.” All tugging at him, the fiends said, “Elder Brother, please don’t be angry. Let us ask you where did those guests come from?” Red in the face, the Daoist did not answer them.

One of the fiends said, “Just now the lads came in to fetch tea, and I heard that they were four monks.”

“So what if they are monks?” said the Daoist angrily. “Among these four monks,” said the fiend, “there is a rather plump one with a white face, and there is also one who has a long horn and huge ears. Have you asked them where they came from?”

“There are indeed two monks like that,” replied the Daoist, “but how did you know? Have you seen these two somewhere before?”

“Elder Brother,” said one of the girls, “you really don’t know all the intricacies behind the matter. That monk with the white face happens to be someone sent by the Tang court to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. This morning he came to our cave to beg for food. Since your sisters have long heard of the reputation of the Tang Monk, we seized him.”

“Why did you want to do that?” asked the Daoist.

The girl said, “We’ve long heard people say that the Tang Monk possesses a true body that has practiced self-cultivation for ten disciples. Anyone who eats a piece of his flesh will attain longevity. That’s why we seized him. Later, we’re trapped in the Purgation Stream by that priest with a long horn and huge ears. First he robbed us of our clothing; then he grew even bolder and wanted to bathe with us in the same pool. We’d not stop him, of course. After he jumped into the water, he changed into a sheet fish spirit and darted back and forth between our legs. He was such a rogue that we thought he would surely assault us. Then he leaped out of the water and changed back into his original appearance. When he saw that we’d not yield to him, he took up a nine-pronged muckrake and tried to kill us all. If we’d not used a little of our intelligence, we’d have been slain by him. We managed to flee, though terror-stricken with our lives, and then we told your nephews to go fight with the monk. We didn’t tarry however, to learn whether they remained dead or alive, for we came straight here to find refuge. We beg you for the sake of our friendship as schoolmates once to exact vengeance this day for us.”

When he heard these words, the Daoist became so angry that his colour changed and his voice quivered. “So, these monks are so insolent, so villainous!” he said. “Relax, all of you. Let me take care of them!”

Thanking him, the girls said, “If Elder Brother wants to fight, we’ll help you.”

“No need to fight! No need to fight!” said the Daoist. “As the proverb says: *you suffer three percent loss already once you fight!* Follow me instead, all of you.”

The girls followed him into his room; placing a ladder behind his bed, he climbed up to the crossbeam and took down a small leather case, approximately eight inches high, a foot long, 4 inches wide, and bolted by a small copper lock. From his sleeve the Daoist also took out a goose-yellow handkerchief, tied to the fringes of which was a tiny key. He opened the lock and took out a small package of medicine that was *the dung of all mountain birds collected to 1000 pounds. When cooked in a copper pot, the time and heat were both even. A thousand pounds made just 1 cup that was reduced to 3 pinches. 3 pinches were then pan-fried, cooked, and refined still some more. This poison was produced at last, rare as previous jewels and gems. Any person who took one taste would behold King Yama in haste!*

“Sisters,” said the Daoist to the girls, “if I want to feed this treasure of mine to an ordinary mortal, all I need’s a thousandth part of a tael and the person will die when it reaches his

stomach. Even a mortal will perish if he ingests three-thousandth parts of a tael. I suppose these monks might be fairly accomplished in the Way and they'll need the larger dosage. Bring me a scale quickly."

One of the girls quickly took up a small scale and weighed in twelve-thousandth parts of a tael of this poison that she then divided into four portions. The Daoist then took twelve red dates, into each of which he added about a thousandth part of the drug after he had crushed the date slightly with his fingers. The twelve dates were then placed inside four tea mugs while two black dates were placed in another tea mug. After the mugs were filled with tea and put on a tray, he said to the girls, "Let me go question them. We'll let them go if they are not from the Tang court. But if they indeed came from the court, I'll ask for a change of tea, and you'll send the lads out with this tea. The moment they drink this, every one of them will perish. You'll be avenged, and your anguish will be relieved." The girls could not have been more grateful.

Putting on a new robe to affect a show of courtesy, the Daoist walked out and asked the Tang Monk and his disciples to take the guest seats once more. "Please forgive me for my absence, old master," he said. "Just now I'd to go inside to give instruction for my young students to pick green vegetables and white turnips, so that they could prepare a meal for you."

"This humble cleric," replied Tripitaka "came to see you with empty hands. How could I dare accept a meal from you?"

Chuckling, the Daoist said, "You and I are both persons who have left the home. The moment we see an Abbey's gate, we can count on receiving a little emolument. How could you mention empty hands? May I ask the old master that monastery do you belong to? Why are you here?"

"This humble cleric" said Tripitaka, "has been sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go acquire scriptures from the Great Thunderclap Monastery in the Western Heaven. We're just passing through your mortal residence and we came in to see you in all sincerity."

On hearing this, the Daoist beamed and said, "The master is a god of great virtue and great piety. This humble Daoist was ignorant of this, and he was remiss in going the proper distance to wait for you. Pardon me! Pardon me!" He then called out, "Lad, go and change the tea quickly, and tell them to hurry up with the food." The little lad ran inside, and he was met by the girls who said to him, "There's fine tea here, all prepared. Take it out."

The lad indeed took out the five tea mugs. Immediately the Daoist presented with both hands one of the mugs containing the red dates to the Tang Monk. When he saw how huge a person 8 Rules was, he took him for the senior disciple while Sand-monk he regarded as the second disciple. Pilgrim, being the smallest, was taken to be the youngest disciple, and only the fourth mug was given to him. Pilgrim was exceedingly perceptive. The moment he accepted the tea mug, he saw that the 1 left on the tray had 2 black dates in it. "Sir," he said at once, "let me exchange my mug with yours."

"To tell you the truth, elder," said the Daoist, smiling, "a poor Daoist in the mountains doesn't always have on hand the proper tea condiments. Just now I personally searched in the back for fruits and found only these twelve red dates with which I made four mugs of tea to serve to you. Your humble Daoist did not want to fail to bear you company, and that was why I made a fifth cup of tea with dates of less desirable colour. It's an expression of respect from this poor Daoist."

"How could you say that?" replied Pilgrim with a chuckle. "As the ancients said, *he who's at home is never poor; it's real poverty when he's on tour*. You live here. How could you claim to be poor? Only mendicants like us are really poor! Let me exchange with you. Let me exchange with you."

On hearing this, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, this is truly the hospitality of our mortal. Drink it. Why do you want to exchange it?"

Pilgrim had no choice but to hold the mug in his left hand; he covered it with his right and stared at the rest of his companions. 8 Rules was both hungry, thirsty, and had always had a huge appetite. When he saw that there were 3 red dates in the tea, he picked them up and swallowed them in 2 gulps. His master ate them, and Sand-monk, too, ate them. In a moment however, 8 Rules' face turned pale, tears rolled down from Sand-monk's eyes, and the Tang Monk foamed at the mouth. Unable to remain in their seats, all 3 of them fainted and fell to the ground. Realising that they had been poisoned, Great Sage hurled the tea mug in his hand at the face of the Daoist. The Daoist shielded himself with upraised hand, his sleeve stopping the mug and sending it crashing to the floor. "How boorish can you be, priest!" snapped the Daoist angrily, "How dare you smash my tea mug?"

"You beast!" scolded Pilgrim. "What do you've to say about those three persons of mine? What have we done to you that you'd want to use poisoned tea on us?"

"Yokel," said the Daoist, "you've caused great calamity! Don't you know?"

"We've just entered your door," replied Pilgrim, "and we've barely announced where we came from. We've not even engaged in any lofty debate. How could we cause any calamity?"

"Didn't you beg for food at the Cobweb Cave? Didn't you bathe at the Purgation Spring?" asked the Daoist. Pilgrim said, "Those bathing in the Purgation Spring were seven female fiends. If you mention them, you must know them, and that means you, too, have to be a monster-spirit. Don't run away! Have a taste of my rod!" Dear Great Sage! He pulled out the golden-hooped rod from his ear and gave it a wave; immediately it grew to have the thickness of a rice bowl. He struck at the face of the Daoist who stepped aside quickly to dodge the blow before meeting his opponent with a treasure sword.

As the two of them brawled and fought, the noise aroused the female fiends inside who surged out, crying, "Spare your efforts, Elder Brother. Let your sisters capture him." When Pilgrim saw them, he became angrier than ever. Wielding the iron rod with both hands, he hurled himself into their midst and attacked them wildly. All seven of the fiends at once loosened their clothes and exposed their snow-white bellies to exercise their magic. From their navels threads and cords poured out that became, in no time at all, a huge awning that had Pilgrim entirely covered down below.

Sensing that the tide was turning against him, Pilgrim at once recited a spell and somersaulted right through the top of the awning to escape. He suppressed his anger to stand still in mid-air to look at those bright shiny cords produced by the fiends: weaving back and forth, up and down, as if guided by a shuttle, they formed a huge web that in an instant had the entire Yellow Flower Abbey enshrouded and removed it clean out of sight. "Formidable! Formidable!" said Pilgrim to himself. "It was a good thing that I didn't fall into their hands! No wonder Bullseye 8 Rules fell so many times! But what shall I do now? My master and my brothers have been poisoned, and I've no idea even of the background of these fiends who have banded themselves together. I'd better go and question that local spirit once more."

Dear Great Sage! He lowered his cloud, made the magic sign with his fingers, and recited a spell beginning with the letter *Ohm* to summon once more the local spirit. Trembling all over, the aged god knelt by the road and respected, saying, "Great Sage, you're going to rescue your master. Why did you turn back here?"

"We did manage to rescue my master earlier," said Pilgrim, "but we ran into a Yellow Flower Abbey not far from where we left you. We went inside with our master to have a look, and we're met by the Abbey master. As we visited with him, my master and my brothers were poisoned by his tea. Luckily, I didn't drink it and I attacked him with my rod. He began to talk about begging food at the Cobweb Cave and bathing in the Purgation Spring, and I knew that that fellow was also a fiend. Just as we're fighting, the seven girls came out and emitted their silk cords but old monkey was smart enough to escape. Since you've been a god here for some time, I thought you must know their background. What kind of monster-spirits are they? Tell me the truth, and I'll spare you a beating."

Respecting, the local spirit said, "The monster-spirits haven't quite lived here for a decade. This humble deity made some investigation three years ago and uncovered their original form: they are seven spider spirits. Those silk cords they produce happen to be cobwebs." Delighted by what he heard, Pilgrim said, "If what you say is true, it's nothing unmanageable. You go back, and let me exercise my magic to bring them to submission." After one more respect the local spirit left.

Pilgrim went up to the Yellow Flower Abbey and pulled off from his tail seventy pieces of hair. Blowing a mouthful of mortal breath on them, he cried, "Change!" They changed into seventy small Pilgrims. Then he blew also on the golden-hooped rod, crying, "Change!" and it changed into seventy rods forked at one end. To each of the small Pilgrims he gave one of these rods while he himself took up one also. They stood by the mass of silk cords and plunged the rods into the web; at a given signal, they all snapped the cords and then rolled them up with their rods. After each of them had rolled up over ten pounds of the cords, they dragged out from inside seven huge spiders, each about the size of a barrel. With arms and legs flailing with their heads bobbing up and down, the spiders cried, "Spare our lives! Spare our lives!"

But those 70 small Pilgrims had them completely pinned down and refused to let go. "Let's not hit them yet," said Pilgrim. "Let's tell them to return our master and our brothers."

"Elder Brother," screamed the fiends, "return the Tang Monk to him and save our lives!"

Dashing out, the Daoist said, "Sisters, I wanted to eat the Tang Monk. I can't save you."

Infuriated by what he heard, Pilgrim cried, "If you don't return my master, take a good look at what your sisters will become!" *Dear Great Sage!* 1 wave of the forked staff and it changed back into his original iron rod that he raised with both hands to smash to pulp those 7 spider spirits. After he had retrieved all his hairs with 2 shakes of his tail, he wielded the iron rod and sped inside all by himself to search for the Daoist. When the Daoist saw his sisters being beaten to death, he was struck by remorse and immediately met his opponent with upraised sword. In this battle each of them was full of hate as he unleashed his magic powers. *What a marvellous fight! The fiend wielded his treasure sword; the Great Sage raised his golden-hooped rod. Because of the Tang court's Tripitaka, all 7 girls were first sent to their deaths. Now the hands of rectitude showed their might to work with magic the golden-tipped rod. The Great Sage was strong in spirit, the bogus mortal, audacious. Their bodies went through the most florid moves; 2 hands like a windlass spun and turned. The sword and the rod banged aloud; low-hung and grey were the clouds. With cutting words and clever schemes as in a picture they charged back and forth. They fought till the wind howled and sand flew to scare tigers and wolves; till Heaven and Earth darkened, and the stars themselves removed.* That Daoist withstood the Great Sage for some fifty rounds when he gradually felt his hands weakening. All at once he seemed to have been completely drained of his strength. He therefore quickly untied his sash and took off his black robe with a loud flap. "My son!" said Pilgrim with a chuckle. "If you're no match for someone, stripping isn't going to help you!" But after the Daoist took off his clothes he raised up both of his hands and exposed 1000 eyes grown on both ribs. *Emitting golden beams, they're terrifying indeed! Dense yellow fog, bright golden beams. Dense yellow fog spurted out from his 2 armpits like clouds; bright golden beams jetted from these thousand eyes like flames – like barrels of gold left and right, copper bells both east and west. This was a bogus mortal's magic, the divine might of a Daoist. Blinding the eyes, the sky, and the sun and moon this dried hot air descended like a coop and had the Great Sage Sun, Equal to Heaven confined in golden beams and yellow fog.* Terribly flustered, Pilgrim spun around and around in the golden beams, unable even to take a step forward or backward. It was as if he had been imprisoned inside a barrel. As the blast of heat became unbearable, he got desperate and leaped straight up into the air to try to pierce the golden beams. The beams were too strong however, and he was sent hurtling back to the ground head over heels. Then he felt pain and when he touched quickly that part of his head where it had rammed the golden beams, he could feel that the skin had softened somewhat. Sorely annoyed, he thought to himself, "What rotten luck! What rotten luck! Even this head of mine today's become useless! In former times, the blows of scimitars and axes couldn't harm it one whit. How'd slamming into the golden beams now soften the skin? It may fester afterwards and I may end up with a permanent sore even if it heals." After a while, the blast of heat was again becoming unbearable, and he thought to himself further, "I can't go forward or backward or move left or right. I can't even crash out of here by going upward. What'll I do? All right, I'd better take the low road and get the mum out of here!" *Dear Great Sage!* Reciting a spell, he changed with 1 shake of his body into a pangolin also named scaly anteater. Truly *his 4 iron claws could bore through hills and rocks like sifting flour; scaly frame could pierce cliffs and ridges like cutting scallions, 2 luminous eyes seemed like a pair of refulgent stars; a sharp, pointed beak, stronger than any steel chisel or diamond drill. This was pangolin of medical fame; scaly anteater was his vulgar name. Look at him!* Hardening his head he burrowed right into the ground and did not emerge again until he was some 20 miles away. The golden beams had managed to cover a distance of only some 10 or 12 miles. After he changed back to his original form, he was overcome by fatigue and his whole body ached. Bursting into tears, he wailed: "O Master! *Since I left by faith the mountain that year, we came west together in unceasing toil. We'd no fear for billows of the sea. How'd we capsize in a small gully?*" As the Handsome Monkey King vented his grief, he suddenly heard someone weeping also behind the mountain. He rose, wiped away his tears, and turned to look; a woman in garb of heavy mourning with a bowl of cold rice soup in her left hand and a few pieces of yellow paper money in her right, came toward him, sobbing every step of the way. Nodding his head, Pilgrim sighed to himself, "Truly as they say, *the person shedding tears meets the tearful one; he whose heart's broken sees the broken heart.* I wonder why this woman is crying. Let me question her a bit." In a short while, the woman came up to where he was standing and Pilgrim saluted to say, "Nun, for whom you're weeping?"

"My husband," said the woman, blinking back her tears, "had a dispute with the master of the Yellow Flower Abbey when he tried to buy some bamboos from him, and he was poisoned to death by that master with poisoned tea. I'm taking some money to his grave to be burned, in order to repay his kindness as a spouse." When Pilgrim heard these words, tears rolled down his cheeks. On seeing that, the woman said to him angrily, "You're so senseless! I grieve on account of my husband. How dare you mock me with your tears and your sorrowful countenance?"

Bending low, Pilgrim said, "Nun, please don't be angry. I'm Pilgrim Sun Wukong, the senior disciple of Tripitaka Tang, the bond-brother and royal envoy of the Great Tang in the Land of the East. We're journeying to the Western Heaven when we'd to rest the horse in the Yellow Flower Abbey. We ran into a Daoist in that Abbey, some kind of a monster-spirit who had made a fraternal alliance with seven spider spirits. Those spider spirits wanted to harm my master in the Cobweb Cave but 8 Rules, Sand-monk, my two brothers, and I succeeded in having him rescued. The spider spirits however, went to the Abbey to tattle on us, claiming instead that we intended to assault them. My master and my brothers were poisoned by the tea offered by the Daoist, and all three of them, including our horse, are now trapped in the Abbey. Only I didn't drink his tea. When I smashed his tea mug, he fought with me, and those seven spider spirits also came out to let loose their silk cords to try to ensnare me. When I escaped through my magic power, I questioned the local spirit and learned of their original form. Then I used my Magic of Body-Division and pulled out the fiends by rolling up their webs. After I beat them all to death with my rod, the Daoist wanted to avenge them and fought once more with me. When he was about to be defeated after some sixty rounds, he took off his clothes to expose a thousand eyes on his two ribs. They emitted countless golden beams to have me completely enclosed, and I found it practically impossible to move at all. That was when I'd to change into a scaly anteater to escape by boring through the ground. I was grieving just now when I heard you weeping, and that was why I questioned you. When I saw that you had at least paper money to repay your husband but I'd nothing at all to thank my late master, I grieved even more. How could I dare mock you?"



Putting down her rice soup and paper money, the woman saluted to Pilgrim and said, “Don’t be offended. I’d no idea that you, too, are a victim. According to what you’ve told me, I can tell that you don’t recognise that Daoist. He is actually the Demon Lord of a Hundred Eyes, and he is also called the Many-Eyed Fiend. But if you’re capable of such a transformation that you’d do battle with him for so long and still escape his golden beams, you must have great magic powers. Nevertheless, you still can’t get near that fellow. Let me recommend a holy worthy to you; with her assistance, you’ll surely be able to overcome those golden beams and bring the Daoist to submission.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim saluted hurriedly and said, “Nun, if you’ve such information, please instruct me. Tell me who the holy worthy is so that I can go and solicit her assistance. If I succeed in getting her here, I’ll be able to rescue my master and avenge your husband’s death.”

“Even if I tell you however,” said the woman, “and even if you manage to get her here to subdue the Daoist, I fear that you’ll be able only to exact vengeance. You’ll be unable to rescue your master.”

“Why not?” asked Pilgrim.

The woman said, “That fellow’s poison is most potent. After a person has been poisoned by the drug, even his bones and marrow will deteriorate after three days. Your journey to find her may prevent you from saving your master in time.”

“I know how to move fast on the road,” replied Pilgrim. “No matter how great the distance is, half a day is all I need.”

The woman said, “In that case, listen to me. About a thousand miles from here there is a mountain by the name of the Purple Cloud Mountain. At the Thousand Flowers Cave in the mountain, there is a holy worthy by the name of Pralambā.<sup>4</sup> She is able to subdue this fiend.”

“Where is this mountain?” asked Pilgrim. “Which direction should I take?” Pointing with her finger, the woman answered, “Due south of here.”

When Pilgrim turned to look, the woman immediately vanished. Pilgrim was so startled that he saluted hurriedly saying, “Which one of the Nuns are you? Your disciple’s been somewhat dazed from all that burrowing in the ground and he can’t recognise you. I beg you to leave me your name so that I can thank you properly.”

From mid-air came the announcement: “Great Sage, it’s I.”

Pilgrim looked up quickly and found that it was the Old Dame of Li Mountain.<sup>5</sup> He rushed up to mid-air to thank her saying, “Old Dame, where did you come from to enlighten me?”

The Old Dame said, “I was just going home from the Festival of the Dragon-Flower Tree. When I learned of your master’s ordeal, I revealed myself under the guise of a mourning wife in order to deliver him from death. You must go to Pralambā quickly but you mustn’t reveal that it’s I who gave you the instruction. That sage tends to put blame on people.”

After Pilgrim thanked her, they parted. Mounting his cloud somersault, Pilgrim at once arrived at the Purple Cloud Mountain. As he stopped his cloud, he saw the 1000 Flowers Cave, outside of which *fresh pines enshroud the lovely scene; jade cedars surround a home divine; green willows fill the mountain paths; strange blossoms clog the brook and rill; fragrant orchids ring a stone house; scented grass on the ridges glistens. The flowing stream’s jade-green throughout; clouds seal up aged hollow trunks. Wild fowl recite melodiously; quiet deer walk leisurely. Each bamboo’s refined, stalk by stalk; each red plum unfurls, leaf by leaf. A cold crow rests on an old tree; a spring bird squeals on a tall bough. Summer wheat grows wide as the fields; autumn grain aplenty on the ground. No leaf would fall in 4 seasons; all flowers bloom in eight periods. Auspicious air will rise often to the sky and hallowed clouds will reach the great grand void.* In great delight, Great Sage walked inside, level by level, and there was no end to the sight of this gorgeous scenery. But there was not a person in view; the place was completely silent with not even the sound of a chicken or a dog. “It’d be,” he thought to himself, “that the sage isn’t home?” He walked further in for another few miles when he came upon a Daoist nun sitting on a couch. She looked as such: *she wore a 5-flower patterned silk cap; had on a robe of knitted gold threads. She trod on cloud-patterned phoenix-beak shoes; a double-tassel silk sash wrapped her waist. Her face had age like autumn after frost; voice cooed like spring swallows before the shrine. She had long known the 3 Vehicles Law, <sup>6</sup>mind often fixed on the 4 Great Truths. <sup>7</sup>The void intuited bore true right fruit; intelligence formed gave freedom complete.* This was a god of 1000 Flowers Cave who was called Pralambā, a noble name. Without stopping, Pilgrim walked right up to her and called out: “Nun Pralambā, I salute you.”

Descending from her couch, the Nun folded her hands to return his greeting and said, “Great Sage, sorry for not coming to meet you. Where did you come from?”

“How could you recognise me as the Great Sage all at once?” asked Pilgrim.

Pralambā said, “When you brought great disturbance to the Celestial Palace that year, your image was spread throughout the universe. Which person would not know and recognise you?”

“Indeed,” replied Pilgrim, “as the proverb says, *the good thing will not leave the door; the evil deed will go a thousand miles.* I bet you didn’t know that I’ve repented and entered the Religious gate.”

“When did you do that?” said Pralambā. “Congratulations! Congratulations!”

“I escaped with my life recently,” said Pilgrim, “in order to give protection to the Tang Monk who had been commissioned to go seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. My master ran into the Daoist of the Yellow Flower Abbey and was poisoned by his poisoned tea. When I fought with that fellow, he had me enclosed in his golden beams, though I escaped through my magic power. When I heard that the Nun could extinguish his golden beams, I came here especially to solicit your assistance.”

“Who told you that?” asked the Nun. “Since attending the Feast of Ullambana Bowl, I’ve not left my door for over three centuries. With my name completely hidden, no one knows me. How did you know?”

“I’m a devil in the earth!” replied Pilgrim. “No matter where you’re, I can find you.”

“All right! All right!” said the Nun. “I’d not leave but if the Great Sage comes here in person, I’ll not destroy the good deed of scripture seeking. I’ll go with you.”

After he thanked her, Pilgrim said, “Pardon my ignorance and my urging. But what sort of weapon do you need to take along?” The Nun said, “I’ve a little embroidery needle which can undo that fellow.”

Pilgrim could not resist saying, “Old Dame has misled me! If I’d known that only an embroidery needle was needed, I’d not have troubled you. Old monkey himself can supply a whole load of such needles!” Pralambā said, “That needle of yours is only made of steel or metal, and it can’t be used. This treasure of mine is not made of steel, iron, or gold. It is rather a product cultivated in the eyes of my son.”

“Who is your son?” asked Pilgrim. “The Star Lord Orionis,” replied Pralambā. Pilgrim was quite astonished. Soon, they saw the bright, golden beams, and Pilgrim said to her, “That’s where the Yellow Flower Abbey is.” Whereupon Pralambā took out from underneath her collar an embroidery needle, not more than half an inch long and as slim as a piece of eyebrow hair. Holding it in her hand, she threw it into the air, and after a little while, a loud crack at once dissipated the golden beams.

“Nun,” cried Pilgrim, exceedingly pleased, “it’s marvellous! Just marvellous! Let’s find the needle! Let’s find the needle!”

“Isn’t this it?” asked Pralambā as she held out her palm. Pilgrim dropped down from the clouds with her and walked inside the Abbey where they found that Daoist sitting there with tightly shut eyes and unable to move. “You brazen fiend!” scolded Pilgrim. “You’re pretending to be blind!” He whipped out the rod from his ear and wanted to strike but Pralambā tugged at him, saying, “Don’t hit him, Great Sage. Let’s go see your master first.”

Pilgrim went directly back to the guest chambers where the three pilgrims were still lying on the ground and foaming at their mouths. “What’ll I do? What’ll I do?” cried Pilgrim, shedding tears.

“Please don’t grieve, Great Sage,” said Pralambā. “Since I came out the door today, I might as well accumulate some secret merit. I’m going to give you three tablets which will serve as an antidote to the poison.” As Pilgrim saluted quickly to receive them, the Nun took out from her sleeve a small, punctured paper wrap. Inside were three red pills that she handed over to Pilgrim, telling him to put one in each of the pilgrim’s mouths. Prying open their teeth, Pilgrim stuffed the pills into their mouths; in a little while, as the medicine reached their stomachs, they began to retch. After the poisonous substance had been thrown up, they regained consciousness. Our 8 Rules was the first to scramble up, crying, “This nausea’s killing me!” Tripitaka and Sand-monk also woke up, both crying, “I’m so dizzy!”

“You’ve all been poisoned by the tea,” said Pilgrim, “and you’d now thank the Nun Pralambā for rescuing you.” Tripitaka arose and tidied his clothes to thank her.

8 Rules said, “Elder Brother where is that Daoist? Let me question him why he wants to harm us in this manner.” Pilgrim at once gave a thorough account of what the spider spirits had done. More and more incensed, 8 Rules said, “If this fellow has formed a fraternal alliance with spider spirits, he, too, must be a monster-spirit.”

“There he is now,” said Pilgrim, pointing with his finger, “standing outside the Abbey and pretending to be blind.” 8 Rules took up his rake and tried to rush out but he was stopped by Pralambā who said to him, “Heavenly Reeds, please calm yourself. The Great Sage knows that there’s no other person at my cave. I’d like to take the Daoist back and make him guard my door.”

Pilgrim said, “We’re all indebted to your great kindness. How could we not comply? But please make him change back into his original form for us to see.”

“That’s easy,” replied Pralambā who went forward and pointed at the Daoist.

Immediately he fell to the dust and appeared in his true form: a huge centipede some seven feet long. Lifting him up with her small finger, Pralambā at once mounted the auspicious clouds to head for the Thousand Flowers Cave. Raising his head to stare after her, 8 Rules said, “This Mum’s quite formidable! How’d she overpower such a vicious creature just like that?”

Smiling, Pilgrim said, “I asked her whether she needed any weapon to break up the golden beams and she told me that she had a tiny embroidery needle, a product cultivated in the eyes of her son. When I asked for his identity, she said that it was Star Lord Orionis. Now the Star Lord is a rooster; so I suppose this Mum must be a hen. Chickens are the deadliest foes of centipedes and that’s why she’d bring him to submission.”

On hearing this, Tripitaka respected some more before saying, “Disciples, let’s pack up and leave.” Sand-monk found some rice and grain inside with which he prepared a meal. After master and disciples ate their fill, they led the horse and poled the luggage out. Once his master walked out the door, Pilgrim started a fire in the kitchen that reduced the entire Abbey to ashes in no time at all. Truly thanks to Pralambā, the Tang Monk came to life; enlightened nature destroyed the Many-Eyed Fiend.

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Long Life reports how vicious the demons are; Pilgrim displays his transformation power

*Desires and feelings come from the same cause; it's natural to have feelings and desires.  
For all ascetics in the Gate of Sand, Chan's desires gone and feelings severed.  
You must take care to persevere like the bright moon, spotless, high in the sky.  
Make no mistake as work and merit advance; perfection yields a great enlightened god.<sup>1</sup>*

Tripitaka and his disciples broke through the web of desires and leaped clear of the stronghold of passions. Urging the horse, they journeyed to the West. Soon it was the end of summer and the beginning of autumn when the fresh cool permeated their bodies. *See the rains the waning heat assail as one Paulownia leaf turns pale. Fireflies dot the sedge-path at night; crickets chirp in the moon's bright light. The mallows unfurl in the dew; red smartweeds the sandbars endue. Rushes are first to decline when cicadas sadly repine.* As they walked along, Tripitaka suddenly saw a tall mountain whose summit pierced the green void, truly touching the stars and blocking the sun. Alarmed, the elder called out to Wukong, “Look at the mountain ahead of us! It’s so tall, I wonder if there’s a road to take us through it.”

“What’re you talking about, Master?” asked Pilgrim, chuckling. “As the proverb says, *the tall mountains will have their passageways; the deep waters will have their ferry boats.* How’d there be no road to take us through! You may proceed without worry.”

On hearing this, the elder smiled in delight and urged his horse to go straight up the tall ridge. They had not travelled more than a few miles when they came upon an old man with flowing white hair all tousled and sparse whiskers like swaying silver threads. He had a string of beads around his neck and held a dragon-headed staff. Standing far up the mountain slope, he cried out in a loud voice, “The elder going to the West, you must stop your horse and pull back the reins. There is a group of fiendish demons in this mountain who have devoured all the mortals in the world. You can’t proceed!”

On hearing these words, Tripitaka paled with fright. The road was already none too level, and the announcement made him even more insecure on the saddle, so much so that he fell down at once from the horse with a thud and lay moaning in the grass, hardly able to move. Pilgrim went over to raise him up, saying, “Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid! I’m here.”

“Just listen to that old man on the tall cliff,” said the elder. “He said that there is a group of fiendish demons in this mountain who have devoured all the mortals of the world. Who is courageous enough to go question him and learn the truth of the matter?”

“You sit on the ground first,” said Pilgrim, “and let me go question him.”

Tripitaka said, “But your looks are hideous and your words, vulgar. If you offend him, I fear that you’ll be unable to get to the truth.”

Laughing, Pilgrim said, “I’ll change into someone more attractive to go question him.”

“You change first for me to see,” said Tripitaka.

Dear Great Sage! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he shook his body and changed at once into a neat young priest, truly with *lovely eyes and clear brow, a round head and a square face. When he moved, he acted like a gentleman; when he spoke, he used no vulgar language.* Shaking loose his silk shirt, he ran up to the Tang Monk and said, “Master, is this a good transformation?”

“It is, indeed!” said Tripitaka, exceedingly pleased. “How could it not be!” remarked 8 Rules. “But he has put all of us down! Even if Old bull rolled around for two, three years, he couldn’t change into someone this attractive!”

Dear Great Sage! Slipping away from them, he walked right up to the old man and saluted, saying, “Dear *Gong-gong*, this humble cleric salutes you.” When the old man saw how young the priest was, though most attractive in looks, he hesitated a little before returning his salute half-heartedly. Patting the head of Pilgrim with his hand, the old man giggled and said, “Little priest where you came from?” “We came from the Great Tang in the Land of the East,” replied Pilgrim, “on our way especially to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures from God. When we arrived here, we heard your announcement about the fiends. My master was quite frightened, and he asked me to come question you to learn exactly who these monster-spirits are who dare cut short our way. May I trouble you to tell me in detail, so that I can send them into exile.”

With a laugh, the old man said, “You’re so young a priest that you don’t know any better. That’s why you mouth these inappropriate words. The magic powers of those demons are enormous. How dare you say that you’d send them into exile?”

“The way you put the matter,” said Pilgrim, laughing also, “seems to indicate that you feel rather protective toward them. You must be a relative of theirs, or at least an intimate neighbour. Otherwise, why would you exalt their intelligence, magnify their virtues, and refuse to disclose thoroughly their background?” Nodding his head, the old man smiled and said, “You’re a priest who knows how to wag your tongue! You must have followed your master as a mendicant into the world and picked up a little magic here and there. You can summon a ghost or bind a spirit, I suppose, and exorcise a few houses for someone. But you’ve not run into those truly vicious fiends!”

“How vicious?” asked Pilgrim. The old man said, “One letter of those monster-spirits to the Spirit Mountain, and all five hundred of those Arhats will come to meet them. One tiny card sent to the Celestial Palace, and each of the Eleven Great Luminaries will honour it. The dragons of the Four Oceans have been their friends, and the mortals of the Eight Caves have met with them frequently. The Ten Kings of Hell address them as brothers, and all the deities of major shrines and cities regard them as friends.”

When he heard this, the Great Sage could not restrain his loud guffaws. Tugging at the old man with his hand, he said, “Stop talking! Stop talking! If those monster-spirits were the servants and houseboys, the brothers and friends of mine, then what they are about to do would not be so significant. Let me tell you this: when they see this young priest coming, they’ll move to someplace else this very night. They’ll not even wait for the morning!”

“Little priest, you’re babbling!” said the old man. “That’s blasphemy! Which gods or sages are your servants and houseboys?”

Laughing, Pilgrim said, “To tell you the truth, the ancestral home of this young priest used to be the Water-Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, located in the Aolai Country. My surname is Sun, and my name is Wukong. Some years ago, I was also a monster-spirit who performed great deeds. During a party with some other demons, I drank a few cups of juice too many and fell asleep. In my dream two men took me to the Region of Darkness with a summons, and I was so riled that I used my golden-hooped rod to beat up the spirit judge and terrify King Yama. I almost overturned in fact the entire Hall of Darkness. Those presiding judges were so frightened that they brought out papers, on which the Ten Kings of Hell affixed their signatures, declaring that if I spared them a beating, they would serve me as my servants and houseboys.”

“Infinite Light!” cried the old man, on hearing this. “This monk has told such a tall tale that he will never grow any taller!”

“Sir,” replied Pilgrim, “I’m tall enough now!”

“How old are you?” asked the old man. “Give it a guess,” said Pilgrim.

The old man said, “Seven or eight perhaps.”

With a chuckle, Pilgrim said, “I’m about ten thousand times seven or eight years old! Let me bring out my old features for you to see. But you must not be offended.”

“How could you’ve some other features?” said the old man.

“This young priest,” said Pilgrim, “has in truth seventy-two features.”

As that old man was somewhat dim-witted, he kept urging the Great Sage who gave his own face a wipe and changed back into his original form. With protruding fangs and a gaping mouth with two bright red buttocks half-covered by a tiger skin kilt, and with a golden-hooped rod in his hands, he stood verily like a living thunder god below the ledge. When the old man saw him, he paled with fright as his legs turned numb. Unable to stand up, he fell down with a thud, and when he scrambled up, he stumbled once more. “Venerable Sir,” said the Great Sage, approaching him, “don’t be afraid of nothing. I’m ugly but kindly disposed. Don’t be afraid! Don’t be afraid! I’m grateful to you for informing us of the demons. Just how many are there, tell me the whole truth so that I can thank you properly.” Trembling all over, the old man could not utter a word; pretending also to be deaf, he refused to reply. When Pilgrim saw that he would not talk, he turned and went back down the slope. “Wukong,” said the elder, “have you returned? Did you find out anything?”

“It’s nothing! It’s nothing!” answered Pilgrim, laughing. “There is, to be sure, a handful of monster-spirits near the Western Heaven. The people here however, are quite timid, and they worry about them. It’s nothing! It’s nothing. *I’m* here!”

“Have you asked him,” said the elder, “what mountain this is, what kind of a cave there is in it, how many fiends there are, and which road can take us to Thunderclap?”

8 Rules spoke up, saying, “Master, don’t be offended by what I’ve to say. If we’re interested in waging a contest in transformations in playing hide-and-seek and in pulling pranks on people even five of us are no match for Elder Brother. But if you consider honesty, then even a column of him cannot rival me.”

“Exactly! Exactly!” said the Tang Monk. “You’re more honest.”

“I don’t know,” said 8 Rules, “why it is that he always takes care of the head but disregards the tail. He has only asked a couple of questions, and then he runs back lamely. Let Old bull go now and find out the truth.”

“Aware of Ability,” said the Tang Monk, “do be careful.”

Dear Idiot! He stuffed the muckrake into his belt and tidied his shirt before swaggering up the mountain slope and calling out to the old man, “*Gong-gong*, I’m saluting you.” After the old man had seen Pilgrim walking off, he managed to struggle up with the help of his staff and, still trembling all over, was about to leave. When he caught sight of 8 Rules however, he became more terrified than ever. “Holy Dad!” he cried. “What sort of nightmare is this that I’ve to meet up with this bunch of nasty people? That monk who left just now’s hideous all right but he had at least three percent human looks. But just look at the pestle mouth, the rush-leaf fan ears, the sheet iron face, and the bristled neck of this monk! He doesn’t even look one percent human!”

“This old *Gong-gong*,” said 8 Rules, chuckling, “is not too pleasant, for he loves to criticise people. How do you regard me really? I may be ugly but I can stand scrutiny. Just wait a moment and I’ll look more attractive.” When the old man heard him speaking at least in a human fashion, he had no choice but to ask him, “Where did you come from?”

8 Rules said, “I’m the second disciple of the Tang Monk, and my religious name is Aware of Ability 8 Rules. Just now the priest who questioned you was called Wukong Pilgrim, my Elder Brother. Because my master blamed him for offending you and for not being able to obtain the truth, he sent me specially to question you again. We’d like to know what mountain this is, what’s the name of the cave in the mountain, how many fiends there are in the cave, and which is the main road to the West. May we trouble you to point these out to us?”

“Are you being truthful with me?” asked the old man. 8 Rules said, “There has never been the teeniest fakery in my whole life.”

“You’re not,” said the old man, “putting on a highfalutin show like the priest before.”

“No, I’m not like him,” said 8 Rules.

Leaning on his staff, the old man said to 8 Rules, “The mountain’s called the Lion-Camel Ridge of eight hundred miles and in it there’s a Lion-Camel Cave where you’ll find three arch-demons.”

“Pshaw!” cried 8 Rules. “You’re too fussy an old man! Only three demons, and you’ve to take all that trouble to announce them to us!”

“Aren’t you afraid?” asked the old man. “To tell you the truth,” replied 8 Rules, “one blow of my Elder Brother’s rod will kill one of them, and one blow of my rake will kill another; I’ve a younger brother, too, and one blow of his fiend-routing staff will kill the third one. When all three of the demons are slain, my master will cross this ridge. What’s so difficult about that?”

Smiling, the old man said, “This monk is completely ignorant! The magic powers of those 3 arch-demons are vast indeed! Moreover, those small fiends under their command number five thousand on the south summit, and five thousand also on the north summit. Those stationed to guard the road leading east number ten thousand, and another ten thousand are guarding the road leading west. There must be five thousand on the patrol teams, and those guarding the cave entrance must run to another ten thousand. There are countless fiends tending the fires and gathering firewood. Overall, they must have some forty-seven or forty-eight thousand troops, each equipped with a nameplate. They devote themselves to devouring humans in this place.”

When Idiot heard these words, he ran back, trembling all over. As he approached the Tang Monk, he dropped his rake and, instead of giving his report, began to evacuate his bowels. “Why aren’t you giving us a report?” snapped Pilgrim. “Why are you squatting there?”

“I’m so scared,” replied 8 Rules, “that even my shit has come out! There’s no further need for me to talk. Let’s scatter while there’s still time to save our lives!”

“This root of idiocy!” said Pilgrim. “I never was frightened when I asked the questions. How is it that when you go, you lose your mind?”

“What’s in fact the matter?” asked the elder.

8 Rules replied, “The old man told me that this mountain is named the Lion-Camel Mountain. In it there’s a Lion-Camel Cave where three old fiends and forty-eight thousand little fiends reside and devote themselves to devouring humans. The moment we put one step on the side of their mountain, we’ll become food in their mouths. We can’t ever proceed!” On hearing this, Tripitaka began to shake all over as his hairs stood on end, saying, “Wukong, what shall we do?”

“Master, relax,” said Pilgrim, laughing. “It’s no big thing! There may be a few monster-spirits here, I suppose but the people of this region are very timid. They frighten themselves with all this rumour about how many fiends there are and how big they are. Look, you’ve me!”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “you’d not talk that way! I’m not like you, and what I learn is the truth. It’s not a rumour. The whole mountain and the whole valley are filled with fiendish demons. How’d we go forward?”

“The mouth and face of an idiot!” said Pilgrim, chuckling. “Allow nothing to scare you! If the whole mountain and the whole valley are full of fiendish demons, old monkey will use his rod. Half a night and they’ll all be exterminated!”

“Shame on you! Shame on you!” said 8 Rules. “Stop the big talk! It’ll take seven or eight days for those monster-spirits just to take their roll call. How could you exterminate them so readily?”

“How do you think I’m going to slay them?” asked Pilgrim. “Suppose they let you grab them,” replied 8 Rules, “bind them, or stop them dead with the Magic of Immobilization. Even then, you can’t kill all of them so quickly.”

With a laugh, Pilgrim said, “No need for grabbing or binding. I give this rod of mine a yank on both ends, crying, ‘Grow!’, and it’ll be four hundred feet long. Next, I wave it once, crying, ‘Thicken!’ and it’ll have an eighty-foot circumference. I roll it toward the south of the mountain once, and five thousand fiends will be crushed to death; I roll it toward the north of the mountain once, and another five thousand will be crushed to death. Then I roll it once from east to west, and forty or fifty thousand who cares how many, will be reduced to meat patties.”

“Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules, “if you roll them down like you roll out dough for noodles, you might finish them off by the second watch.”

“Master,” said Sand-monk, laughing on one side, “what are you afraid of when Big Brother has such vast magic powers? Mount up and get going!”

When the Tang Monk heard them debating about their abilities, he had no choice but to calm himself and climb up on the horse. As they proceeded, they discovered that the old man who came to inform them had vanished. “He must be a fiend,” said Sand-monk, “who exploited deliberately the reputation and power of the demons to come and frighten us.”

“Don’t jump to any conclusion,” said Pilgrim. “Let me go have a look.”

Dear Great Sage! Leaping up to the peak, he looked all around without spotting anyone. As he turned his face however, he saw coloured mists flickering in the air. He immediately leaped upon the clouds to give chase and soon he caught sight of the Gold Star Venus. Rushing up to a god, Pilgrim tugged at him with his hands and used his vernacular name to address him, saying, “Long Life Li! Long Life Li! You’re such a rogue! If you’ve anything to say, you’d have said it to my face. Why did you assume the appearance of an old country bumpkin to beguile me?”

The Gold Star saluted him hurriedly and said, “Great Sage, I’m sorry for not informing you sooner. Please forgive me! Please forgive me! These arch-demons, possessive of vast magic powers, indeed make for a rugged hurdle. If you exercise all your powers in transformation and all your cleverness, you may pass through. If you but slacken a little, it’ll be difficult for you to proceed.” Thanking him, Pilgrim said, “I’m grateful! If this is such a difficult place to traverse, please go to the Region Above and request from the Jade Emperor some celestial soldiers to assist old monkey.”

“We’ve plenty of those for you,” replied the Gold Star. “Once I bring your message up there, we can round up even one hundred thousand celestial soldiers if you need them.”

Pilgrim took leave of the Gold Star and dropped from the clouds to face Tripitaka. “That old man,” he said, “who came to bring us the information happened to be the Star Venus.” Folding his hands before him, the elder said, “Disciple, catch up with him quickly, and ask him whether there is another road we can take.”

“There’s no detour,” said Pilgrim, “for this mountain as it is is eight hundred miles across. I don’t even know how wide it is on both sides. How could we take a detour?”

On hearing this, Tripitaka could not restrain the tears flowing from his eyes. “Disciple,” he said, “if it’s so difficult, how could I ever hope to worship God?”

“Stop crying! Stop crying!” Pilgrim said, “Once you cry, you become completely feeble. This information of his can’t be all true, for his main purpose is to arouse our vigilance. As the saying goes, ‘To tell is to exaggerate.’ Please dismount and sit here for the moment.”

“What sort of discussion are we having now?” asked 8 Rules.

"No discussion," replied Pilgrim. "You just stand here and guard Master with all diligence while Sand-monk can watch the horse and the luggage. Let old monkey go up the ridge to do a little detection to see just how many fiends there are. I'll catch one of them and question him thoroughly; if need be, I'll even make him write up a confession and list in detail the names of all their old and young. Then I'll order them to close up their cave and forbid them from barring our way, so that Master will be able to go through this place peacefully and quietly. Only then will you perceive the ability of old monkey!" All Sand-monk could say to him however, was, "Be careful! Be careful!"

"No need for all your instructions!" said Pilgrim with a laugh. "Once I get up there, *I'll open a pathway even if it's the Great Eastern Sea; I'll punch an opening if it's an ironclad mountain.*"

Dear Great Sage! Whistling, he mounted the cloud somersault to leap up to the tall summit where he pushed aside the creepers and vines to look all around. There was however, not a sound or a trace of human beings. He spoke aloud to himself, "I've made a mistake! I've made a mistake! I'd never have let the oldie Gold Star go. He was actually trying to frighten me. If there's any monster-spirit around here, he would have jumped out and played in the wind, or he would fool with his lance or rod to practice his martial art. How is it that there is no one..." As he was thus talking to himself, he heard the loud bangs of a rattle behind the mountain. Turning hurriedly to look, he discovered a little fiend, hauling a banner on his shoulder which had on it the inscribed word, command. He had a bell tied to his waist, and he was beating a rattle with his hand as he walked from north to south. Pilgrim stared at him and thought that he was about twelve feet in height. Smiling to himself, Pilgrim said, "He must be a postal soldier on his way to deliver a document. Let me eavesdrop on him to see what he has to say."

Dear Great Sage! Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and changed with one shake of his body, into a fly. He flew up to his cap and alighted gently on it to eavesdrop on the fiend. After he had turned onto the main road, the little fiend kept beating his rattle and shaking his bell while he mumbled to himself, "Those of us patrolling the mountain should all be on guard against that Pilgrim Sun. He knows how to change into a fly." Astounded by what he heard, Pilgrim said to himself, "He must have seen me! How could he know my name and how could he know I might change into a fly, if he hadn't?"

But that little fiend had not seen him. It was actually those arch-demons who somehow managed to give this instruction to the little fiends and this one was just repeating what he heard. Pilgrim of course did not know this; suspecting that he had been seen, he was about to slay the fiend with the rod when he thought to himself, "I recall that the Gold Star told Eight Rules that there're three old fiends and some forty-seven or forty-eight thousand little fiends. If those little fiends are like this one, another forty thousand won't make a bit of difference. But I wonder how powerful those three old demons are. Let me go question him, then I can raise my hands." *Dear Great Sage!* He was going to question him. He leaped down from his cap and alighted instead on a tree to allow the little fiend to walk a few steps ahead. Quickly he changed into another little fiend having in fact the same clothes and like him, beating the rattle, shaking the bell, hauling the banner, and mumbling the same words. The only difference was that he was several inches taller than the other fiend. He ran up to the other little fiend and called out, "You on the road, wait for me."

Turning around, the little fiend said, "Where did you come from?"

"My good man!" said Pilgrim with a giggle. "Can't you recognise someone from the same family?"

"You're not in our family," said the little fiend. "What do you mean?" said Pilgrim. "Take a good look."

"But you look unfamiliar," said the little fiend. "I don't recognise you! I don't recognise you!"

"I know I look unfamiliar," replied Pilgrim. "I'm one of those who tend the fires, and you've seldom met me."

Shaking his head, the little fiend said, "Never! Never! Even among those brothers in our cave who tend the fires, there's no one with a pointed mouth like yours." Pilgrim thought to himself, "I've made my mouth a little too pointed." He lowered his head at once and gave his mouth a rub, saying, "My mouth's not pointed!" Immediately, his mouth was not pointed anymore.

"Just now," said the little fiend, "your mouth was pointed. How could it change like that after you gave it a rub? How baffling! You can't very well belong to our family! I've never seen you before! It's too suspicious! Moreover, the domestic laws of our great kings are very strict: those who tend the fires always tend the fires, and those who patrol the mountain will patrol the mountain. They couldn't have asked you to tend the fires, and then asked you also to patrol the mountain, could they?" Exceedingly clever with his mouth, Pilgrim at once replied, "You've no idea that our great kings had promoted me, when they saw how good I was at tending the fires, and asked me to patrol the mountain."

The little fiend said, "All right. There are forty of us who patrol the mountain to one platoon, and we've altogether ten platoons. Each of us is different in age, and each has a different name. To prevent confusion among the ranks and to facilitate taking the roll, our great kings gave us each a nameplate. Do you've one?"

Now Pilgrim had changed into a semblance of only what he could see of the little fiend; namely, how he was dressed and what he was doing. Since he had not seen the plate, he, of course, did not have it on him. Dear Great Sage! Refusing to admit that he had none, he followed the drift of the question instead and said, "How could I not have a plate? I just received a brand new one. But you take out yours first for me to have a look."

Completely unaware that this was a trick, that little fiend hitched up his clothes and pulled out for Pilgrim to see a gold-lacquered plate that was tied to his body with a small cotton thread. On the back of the plate Pilgrim saw the inscription, In Command of All Demons. In front there were three printed words: Little Wind Cutter. He thought to himself, "It goes without saying that those who patrol the mountain will be named some sort of Wind Cutters." He therefore said to the little fiend, "Lower your clothes now, and let me show you my plate." Turning to one side, Pilgrim yanked off a small piece of hair from the tip of his tail and gave it a pinch, whispering, "Change!" It changed at once into another gold-lacquered plate that had a small cotton thread attached to it. On it were the three printed words: Chief Wind Cutter. When he took it out and showed it to him, the little fiend was greatly taken aback. "We're all named Little Wind Cutters," he cried, "but how could you've the name of Chief Wind-Cutter?"

As he had always acted with the greatest calculation and spoken with the utmost shrewdness, Pilgrim immediately said, "You really have no idea that our great kings promoted me to be a patrol commander when they saw how well I tended the fires. They also gave me a new plate with the name, Chief Wind Cutter, and the charge that I'd lead the forty of you in this platoon." On hearing this, the fiend saluted hurriedly, saying, "Captain, Captain, you've just been commissioned, and that's why you look unfamiliar. Please forgive me for offending you with my words."

"I'll not blame you," chuckled Pilgrim as he returned his salute. "But I do have a request: an introductory gift of five ounces of silver per person."

"Don't be too impatient, Captain," said the little fiend. "Let me join up with my platoon at the south of the ridge, and we'll all chip in."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "I'll go with you."

Indeed the little fiend walked ahead while the Great Sage followed him. In less than a few miles, they came upon a pen peak. It was called a pen peak because on that mountain the peak rose straight up for some forty or fifty feet, as a pen sticking up from its rack. Hence the name. After Pilgrim went up there, he gave his tail a wag and leaped to the tallest point to sit down. "Wind Cutters," he cried, "gather around!" All those Little Wind Cutters saluted to him down below, saying, "Captain, we wait on you."

"Do you know," asked Pilgrim, "why the great kings sent me out here?"

"No, we don't," replied the little fiends.

Pilgrim said, "The great kings want to devour the Tang Monk but their only fear's that Pilgrim Sun's vast magic powers. He is capable of many transformations, they claim and they're afraid that he may change into a Little Wind-Cutter to walk on this road to spy on us. They therefore have promoted me to Chief Wind Cutter and asked me to make an investigation to see whether there is any specious one among your platoon."

"Captain," all those Little Wind Cutters said in unison, "we're all genuine."

"If you're," said Pilgrim, "do you happen to know what sort of abilities our great kings possess?"

One of the Little Wind Cutters said, "I do."

"If you do," said Pilgrim, "tell me quickly. If I agree with you, you're genuine but if you make the slightest error, you're a specious one. I'll certainly arrest you and take you to see the great kings." When that Little Wind Cutter saw him sitting loftily on the peak and wielding his authority left and right, he had little choice but to speak the truth, saying, "Our great-great king has vast magic powers and enormous abilities. With one gulp, he once swallowed one hundred thousand celestial warriors."

On hearing this, Pilgrim bellowed, "You're false!" Horrified, the Little Wind Cutter said, "Dad Captain, I'm real. How could you say that I'm false?"

"If you're," said Pilgrim, "why did you babble? How big is the great-great king that he can swallow with one gulp one hundred thousand celestial warriors?"

The Little Wind Cutter said, "Perhaps the captain does not know that our great-great king is capable of such transformation that he can be big enough to reach the celestial hall when he wants to, or he can become as small as a vegetable seed. When the Lady Queen Mum convened the Festival of Mortal Peaches in a former year and did not send an invitation to our great-great king, he wanted to strive with Heaven. The Jade Emperor sent one hundred thousand celestial warriors to bring him to submission but our great king exercised his magic body of transformation and opened his mouth big and wide as a city gate. He charged at the celestial warriors, so terrifying them that they dared not do battle and closed up the South Heaven Gate instead. That's what I meant when I said that he once swallowed one hundred thousand celestial warriors with one gulp."

On hearing this, Pilgrim smiled silently to himself, saying, "If it's this kind of ability, old monkey is quite capable of it." He spoke out loud again, saying, "What sort of abilities does second great king possess?"

Another Little Wind Cutter replied, "Our second great king is about thirty feet tall; he has silkworm-like eyebrows, phoenix eyes, a lovely lady's voice, and teeth like long flat poles. His nose, moreover, resembles a dragon. When he fights with someone, all he needs to do is to wrap his nose around his enemy. Though that person may have an iron back and a bronze body, his spirit will expire and his soul will perish!"

"A monster-spirit," said Pilgrim to himself, "with a trunk like that is not difficult to catch."

He spoke out loud once more, saying, "What sort of abilities does the third great king possess?" Another Little Wind Cutter said, "Our third great king is no fiendish creature of the mortal world, for he has the name of the Roc of Ten Thousand Cloudy Miles. When he moves, he whips up the wind and transports the seas; he reaches the north and rules the south. On his person he also carries a treasure, called the yin-yang double-force vase. If a person is placed inside it, he will turn to liquid within one and three-quarter hours."

When he heard this, Pilgrim became alarmed, saying to himself, "I'm not scared of the demon but I'd better be careful about his vase." He spoke out loud again, saying, "You've all spoken quite accurately about the abilities of our three great kings as accurately as I've known them to be. But do you know which of the great kings would like to devour the Tang Monk?"

"Captain," said another Little Wind Cutter, "do you mean that you don't know?"

"Don't I know more than you?" snapped Pilgrim. "You're the ones who may not know the truth of the matter, and that's why I was sent to give you a thorough interrogation."

The Little Wind Cutter said, "Our great-great king and the second great king have long resided in the Lion-Camel Cave of the Lion-Camel Ridge. Our third great king however, did not live here, for his original residence was located about four hundred miles west of here, in a city by the name of the Lion-Camel State. Five centuries ago, he devoured the entire city – the king, the civil and military officials, the populace, male and female, old and young – and took over the kingdom. All the inhabitants of that city now are fiends. I don't know which year it was that he learned that the Tang court in the Land of the East had commissioned a monk to go seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. That Tang Monk, so the saying goes, is a good man who has practiced austerities for ten disciples. If anyone eats a single piece of his flesh, he will gain longevity and never grow old. But fearing his disciple, Pilgrim Sun who is said to be exceedingly formidable, our third great king was afraid that he couldn't quite handle the situation all by himself. He came, therefore, to become a bond-brother with the two great kings at this place. The three of them are thus united in their determination and efforts to catch that Tang Monk."

When Pilgrim heard this, he was filled with anger. "These brazen fiends are so audacious! I'm protecting the Tang Monk so that he may attain the right fruit. How could they plan to devour my man?" He was so mad that he clenched his teeth, whipped out his iron rod, and leaped down from the tall peak. All he had to do was to slam the rod down on the heads of the little fiends, and they were immediately reduced to meat patties! When he saw them like that however, he was moved somewhat to pity. "Alas," he said to himself, "they were kind enough after all to have spilled everything about their family to me. How could I finish them off just like that? All right! All right! What's done is done!"

Dear Great Sage! Because of the impediment in his master's way, he had no choice but to do something like this. He took down one of the nameplates and tied it to his own waist. The banner with the word, "command," he hauled on his shoulder, the bell he hung on his belt, and he took up the rattle. Facing the wind, he made the magic sign and recited a spell to change with one shake of his body into the appearance of that Little Wind Cutter whom he first met on the road. In big strides, he followed the road back to search for the cave and to do some more detection on those three old fiendish demons. Truly, these were *the Handsome Monkey King's 10000 ways to change! 10000 permutations, what real abilities!* He dashed deeply into the mountain, following the path on which he came. As he ran along, he suddenly heard people shouting and horses neighing. When he raised his eyes to look, he saw that the noise was coming from a huge mob of little fiends in front of the Lion-Camel Cave, all equipped with columns of scimitars, lances, spears, and halberds with flags and banners. Delighted, Great Sage said to himself, "Long Life Li's words are not far off the mark!" The way that those little fiends were arrayed had an order to it: two hundred and fifty of them made up one huge column, to which was assigned a tall coloured flag. When he spotted some forty such flags, he knew that there had to be at least ten thousand troops right there before the cave. Thereupon he thought further to himself, "Old monkey has already changed into a Little Wind Cutter. Once I step inside, I'd have to give some answers should those old demons question me on patrolling the mountain. If I'm recognised because of some slip-up in my words, how am I going to get away? Even if I want to run out the door, how could I get out with so many of them barring the door? If I want to seize the fiendish kings inside the cave, I must get rid of these fiends before the door first."

*How'd I get rid of the fiends? Marvellous Great Sage!* He thought some more to himself: "Though those old demons have never met my face, they've already known the reputation of old monkey. Let me rely on that reputation, then, and exploit its power; let me give some big talk to frighten them a bit, and see whether those creatures of Middle Land<sup>2</sup> indeed have sufficient affinity to be rewarded by us taking the scriptures back to them. If they do, a few bravado sentences of mine will frighten the fiends enough to scatter them. If those creatures however, do not have sufficient affinity so that we can't acquire the true scriptures, then *even if I preach till the lotus flowers appear, I'll not dispel the spirits before the cave.*"

His mind thus questioning his mouth, and his mouth thus questioning the mind, he beat his rattle and shook his bell as he marched up to the entrance of the Lion-Camel Cave. He was immediately met by the little fiends of the forward camp who said, "Little Wind Cutter, have you returned?" Instead of answering them, Pilgrim lowered his head and walked on.

At the 2<sup>nd</sup>-level camp, he was stopped again by some more little fiends who said, "Little Wind-Cutter, have you returned?"

"I've," replied Pilgrim. "When you went on patrol this morning," said the fiends, "did you run into Pilgrim Sun?"

"I've," replied Pilgrim, "he's polishing his pole at the moment."

A little frightened, those little fiends said, "What does he look like? What sort of a pole is he polishing?" Pilgrim said, "He was squatting there by the side of a brook, and he still seemed like a trailblazing deity. If he stood up, he would have to be over a hundred feet tall! He had in his hands an iron rod that resembled a huge pole, so thick it was that it had to have the thickness of a rice bowl. As he sprinkled some water on the stone ledge, he rubbed his rod on it while he mumbled to himself, 'O dear pole! I've not taken you out for a while to show your magic powers. Now that you've been taken out, may you beat to death for me all those monster-spirits, even if there are one hundred thousand of them! Then let me slay also those three arch-demons and offer them as sacrifices to you!' Once he has polished his rod so that it shines, he will no doubt slaughter first those ten thousand of you before the door."

When those little fiends heard these words, every one of their hearts quivered and their galls shook, as their souls melted and their spirits dispersed. "Think on this, all of you," said Pilgrim again. "The flesh of that Tang Monk doesn't amount to many pounds, you know, and I doubt if we'll ever get to receive our portions even if he were divided up. Why should we withstand that pole for them? Why don't we ourselves just scatter?"

"You're right," said the various fiends. "Let's look after our own lives and leave."

All of these fiends were no more than wolves, tigers, leopards, and the like. With a roar, all these beasts and fowl simply dispersed in every direction. And so, those few subversive sentences of the Great Sage Sun worked like the poems of Chu<sup>3</sup> when they scattered some 8000 troops. Secretly delighted, Pilgrim said to himself, "Marvellous! Those old fiends are good as dead! If words will make them run, how'd they dare meet me face to face? When I get inside however, I'd better repeat what I said. For if I miss saying something, a couple of those little fiends who've run inside just now may reveal my secret." *Look at him! He was set to approach the ancient cave; with boldness he walked deep inside the door.*

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**Mind Monkey drills through the yin-yang body; demon lords return to the true great Way**

That Great Sage Sun walked inside the cave to look left and right. He saw *a mound of skeletons, a forest of dead bones; human hair packed together as blankets and flesh trodden as dirt and dust; human tendons knotted on the trees were dried, parched, and shiny like silver. In truth there were mountains of corpses and seas of blood; indeed the putrid stench was terrible! The little fiends on the east gouged out flesh from living persons; the brazen demons on the west boiled and cooked fresh human meat. Only Handsome Monkey King had such heroic gall; no other mortal would dare enter this door.* After a little while, he walked through the second-level door to look around inside. Ah! What he saw in here was quite different from the outside; it was a place both quiet and elegant, both handsome and spacious. On the left and right were exotic grass and rare flowers; there were old pines and aged bamboos front and back. He had to walk however, for another seven or eight miles before he reached the third-level door, through which he stole a glance. Inside the door and sitting loftily on three high seats were three old fiends who appeared most savage and hideous. The middle one had *teeth like files and saws, a round head and a square face. He had a voice like thunder and flashing eyes like lightning. His nose curled skyward; his brows sprouted flames. When he moved, all other beasts trembled; when he sat, all demons shook and quivered. This was the king of beasts, the green-haired lion fiend.* The one to his left had *phoenix eyes and golden pupils, yellow tusks and stubby legs, long nose and silver hair, a head that seemed tail-like; knotted brows beneath his round forehead and a huge, rugged torso. He had a soft voice like a lissom beauty but his white face was a bull-head demon's. A brute of prolonged self-cultivation, this was the yellow-tusked old elephant.* The one to his right had *golden wings and leviathan head, 'star-like pupils and leopard eyes. He ruled the north, governed the south – fierce, strong, and courageous. Coming alive he could fly and soar while quails quaked and dragons dreaded. When he shook his feathers, all the birds went into hiding; when he stretched his sharp claws, all the fowl cowered in terror. Able to reach a cloudy distance of 90000 miles, this was the great eagle-roc.* Below them stood some one hundred captains, all in complete armour and military regalia, and looking most truculent and fierce. When Pilgrim saw them however, he was filled with delight. Not the least bit frightened, he marched through the door in big strides, and after he dropped his rattle, he lifted his head and said, "Great Kings." Smiling broadly, the three old demons said, "Little Wind Cutter, have you returned?"

"I've indeed," replied Pilgrim in a ringing voice.

"Have you found out anything about Pilgrim Sun when you're on patrol in the mountain?"

"In the presence of the great kings," replied Pilgrim, "I dare not speak."

"Why not?" asked the first old demon.

"By the command of the great kings," said Pilgrim, "I went forward, beating my rattle and shaking my bell. As I walked along, I suddenly caught sight of a person squatting by a brook. Even then he looked like a trailblazing deity, and if he had stood up, he would have been undoubtedly over a hundred feet tall. Bailing some water from the brook, he was polishing with it a huge pole on a rock. As he did so, he kept mumbling to himself that up till now, he hadn't been able to show off the magic power of his pole. Once he had polished the pole enough to make it glow, he said he would come and use it on the great kings. I knew he had to be that Pilgrim Sun, and that's why I've returned to make my report."

When that old demon heard these words, he perspired profusely. Shaking all over, he said, "Brothers, I told you not to bother the Tang Monk. His disciple has such vast magic powers that he has already made plans for us. Now he is polishing his rod to beat us up. What shall we do?" Then he gave this order: "Little ones, summon all the soldiers outside the cave to come in. Shut the door, and let those priests pass."

One of the captains who knew what had happened said immediately, "Great King, the little fiends guarding the door outside have all scattered."

"How could they have all scattered?" asked the old demon. "They must have heard the bad news, too. Shut the door quickly! Shut the door quickly!"

The various fiends hurriedly banged the front and back doors shut and bolted them. Becoming somewhat alarmed, Pilgrim thought to himself, "After they close the doors, they might question me on some other business in their house. If I can't answer them, I'll give myself away. Won't I be caught then? Let me scare them a little bit more, so that they'll open the doors again for me to flee if I need to." He therefore went forward again and said, "Great Kings, that Pilgrim Sun said something that's even more dreadful."

"What else did he say?" asked the old demon.

Pilgrim said, "He said that when he had caught hold of the three of you, he would skin the great-great king, he would debone the second great king, and he would pull out the tendons of the third great king. If you shut your doors and refuse to go out, he is capable of transformations, you know. He may well change into a tiny fly, come in through a crack in the door, and seize all of us. What shall we do then?"

"Brothers," said the old demon, "be careful. There is hardly a fly in our cave. If you see a fly coming in here, it has to be that Pilgrim Sun." Smiling to himself, Pilgrim thought, "I'll give him a fly to scare him a bit. Then he'll open the doors."

The Great Sage stepped to one side and pulled off a piece of hair behind his head. Blowing a mouthful of mortal breath on it, he whispered, "Change!" and it at once changed into a gold-headed fly that darted up and flew smack into the face of the old demon. "Brothers, this is awful!" cried a horrified old demon. "That little something has entered our door!" Those fiends, young and old, were so terrified that they took up pitchforks and brooms to swat madly at the fly.

Unable to contain himself, Great Sage broke into loud giggles that, alas, he should have never permitted himself to do. For once he laughed, his original features also appeared. When the third old demon saw him, he leaped forward and grabbed him, crying, "Elder Brothers, we're almost fooled by him!"

"Who is fooling whom?" asked the first old demon.

"The one who was speaking to us just now," replied the third fiend, "was no Little Wind Cutter. He is Pilgrim Sun. He must have run into Little Wind Cutter, slain him somehow, and changed into his appearance to deceive us here." Greatly shaken, Pilgrim said to himself, "He has recognised me!" Rubbing his face hurriedly with his hand to correct his features, he said to those fiends, "How could I be Pilgrim Sun! I'm the Little Wind Cutter. The great king has made a mistake."

"Brother," said the old demon, smiling, "he is Little Wind Cutter. For three times every day he answers my roll call. I know him." Then he asked Pilgrim, "Do you've your nameplate?"

"I do," replied Pilgrim, and he took it out at once from inside his clothes. More convinced than ever, the old fiend said, "Brother, don't falsely accuse him."

"Elder Brother," said the third fiend, "didn't you see him? He was giggling just now with his face half turned, and I saw for a moment a thunder god beak on him. When I grabbed him, he changed back immediately into his present looks." He then called out: "Little ones, bring me some ropes." The captains took out ropes immediately. Wrestling Pilgrim to the ground, the third fiend had him bull-tied before they hitched up his clothes to examine him. It became apparent at once that he was *the* Ban-Horse-Plague all right! Pilgrim was capable of seventy-two kinds of transformation. If it was a matter of changing into a fowl, a beast, a plant, a utensil, or an insect, his entire body could be transformed. But when he had to change into another person, only his face but not his body could be transformed. When they lifted up his clothes, therefore, they saw a body full of brown fur, two red buttocks, and a tail.

When he saw this, the first old fiend said, "Though he may have the face of Little Wind Cutter, it's the body of Pilgrim Sun. It's he. Little ones, bring us some juice first, so that I may present to the third great king a cup of merit. Since we've caught Pilgrim Sun, there is no doubt that the Tang Monk will be the food of our mouths."

"Let's not drink juice just yet," said the third fiend. "Pilgrim Sun is an exceedingly slippery character, for he knows many ways of escape. I fear we may lose him. Tell the little ones to haul out our vase and put Pilgrim Sun inside it. Then we can drink."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said the old demon, laughing loudly.

He at once summoned 36 little fiends to go to their weapons chamber and haul out the vase. The vase was big. It would need 36 persons to carry it. Though it was no more than 24 inches tall, that vase was a treasure governed by the double primal forces of yin and yang. Its magic reactions inside were activated by the seven jewels, the eight trigrams, and the twenty-four solar terms. Only thirty-six persons, a number which corresponded to the number of constellations in the Heavenly Ladle group, would have sufficient strength to lift it up. In a little while, the little fiends had the treasure vase hauled out and set before the third-level door. After they had unpacked it from its wrappings and removed the stopper, they untied Pilgrim and stripped him naked. Then they carried him up to the mouth of the vase, and immediately he was sucked inside with a loud whoosh by the mortal breath of the vase. It was then covered again with its stopper, on top of which they added a tape to seal it. Beckoning his companions to join him to drink, the old fiend said, "Now that this little ape's entered my treasure vase, he'd better not think of the road to the West anymore. If he ever wanted to worship God and acquire scriptures, he might as well turn his back, take up the wheel of transmigration, and seek Religious treasure in the next disciple!"

Great Sage found the vase to be quite small for his body once he reached the inside. He decided therefore to transform himself into someone smaller and squat in the middle of the vase. Finding it to be quite cool after some time, he could not refrain from chuckling to himself and saying out loud, "These monster-spirits are banking on their false reputation! How'd they tell people that once someone's placed inside the vase, he'd change into pus and blood after one and three-quarter hours? If it's cool like this, I can live here for seven or eight years with no trouble!" *Alas!* The Great Sage had no idea of how that treasure worked: if someone who had been placed within it remained silent for a whole year, then it would remain cool for all that time. But the moment that person spoke, fire would appear to burn him. Hardly had the Great Sage spoken, therefore, when he saw that the entire vase was engulfed in flames. Fortunately, he was not without abilities; sitting in the middle, he made the fire-repellent magic sign with his fingers and faced the flames calmly. After about half an hour, some forty snakes crawled out from every side and began to bite him. Pilgrim stretched forth his hands, picked up the snakes, and with a violent wrench tore them into eighty pieces. In a little while however, three fire dragons emerged and had him encircled top and bottom. As the situation was fast becoming unbearable, Pilgrim was rather flustered saying to himself, "I can take care of other things but these fire dragons are hard to deal with. If I don't get out of here, the fire and the heat may overwhelm me after a while. What then? I think I'd better push my way out by making my body bigger." *Dear Great Sage!* Making the magic sign with his fingers and reciting a spell, he cried, "Grow!"

At once his body reached the height of over a hundred feet but the vase also grew in size with him. Reversing his magic, he reduced the size of his body but the vase, too, grew smaller with him. Greatly alarmed, Pilgrim said, "Hard! Hard! Hard! How could it grow big or small with me like that? What shall I do?" He had hardly finished speaking when he felt some pain on his shanks. Rubbing them hurriedly with his hand, he found his shanks were turning flaccid because of the fire. More and more anxious, he thought to himself, "What's to become of me? Even my shanks are weakened by the fire. I'll be reduced to a cripple!"

He was hardly able to hold back his tears. Thus it was that *he thought of Tripitaka, having met demons and woes; missed the sage monk when beset by fatal ordeals.* "O Master!" he cried. "Since that year when I embraced the truth because of the Nun Guanyin's persuasion and was delivered from my Heaven-sent calamity, I suffered with you the trek through various mountains and subdued many

fiends, including the bringing to submission of 8 Rules and Sand-monk. All my labour, all my bitter toil were done with the hope that we'd reach the West together and attain the right fruit. Little did I realise that I'd meet such vicious demons today! Having been thrown in here by my mistake, old monkey will lose his life, and you'll be stranded halfway up the mountain, unable to proceed. Could it be that my past misdeeds were what brought on my present ordeal?"

As he grieved like that, he suddenly thought to himself, "On the Serpent Coil Mountain<sup>2</sup> that year, the Nun gave me as a gift three life-saving hairs. I wonder if I still have them. Let me search for them." He touched his whole body with his hands and found three hairs on the back of his neck to be especially stiff. Delighted, he said to himself, "All my hairs are quite soft, and only these three happen to be stiff. They must be my lifesavers!"

Clenching his teeth to endure the pain, he pulled off the hairs and blew on them a mouthful of mortal breath, crying, "Change!" One of the hairs changed into a diamond drill, the second one into a strip of bamboo, and the third into a piece of cotton rope. Bending the strip into the shape of a bow, he tied the rope to both ends and used it to guide the drill to drill away at the bottom of the vase. After a while, light filtered in through a small hole. "Lucky! Lucky!" he said, highly pleased. "I can get out now!"

As he was about to use transformation to escape, the vase suddenly turned cool once more. Once he drilled through the vase's bottom the 2 forces of yin and yang leaked out. Dear Great Sage! He retrieved his hairs and, shrinking the size of his body, changed into a mole cricket, so delicate that it was no thicker than a strand of whisker and no longer than a piece of eyebrow hair. He crawled out of the hole but instead of leaving, he flew directly up to the old demon's head and alighted on it. The old demon was drinking merrily when all of a sudden, he put down his cup and said, "Third Younger Brother, has Pilgrim Sun melted?"

"It's about time, isn't it?" said the third demon, smiling.

The old demon gave the order for the vase to be brought up to the table, and those 36 little fiends immediately went to haul it. When they discovered however, that the vase had become very light, the terrified fiends cried, "Great Kings, the vase has turned light."

"Nonsense!" snapped the old demon. "Our treasure is the perfect product of the double forces of yin and yang. How could it have turned light?" One of the more courageous little fiends picked up the vase all by himself and brought it near the table, saying, "See for yourself whether it's lighter or not."

Removing the stopper, the old demon peered inside and, when he saw a speck of light coming from the bottom, he burst out, "The vase is empty!" Unable to contain himself, the Great Sage shouted on his head, "My dear child! I'm gone!"

"He's gone! He's gone!" cried the other fiends. "Close the doors! Close the doors!"

Pilgrim retrieved the clothes they took from him with 1 shake of his body and changing back into his original form, bounded out of the cave. "Monster-spirits, don't you dare be unruly!" he shouted back at them as he left. "The vase's been punctured and it can be used on humans no more. It's only good for a night pot!"

Merrily and noisily he trod the clouds and went back to the place where he left the Tang Monk. The elder at the time was just saying a prayer toward the sky, using pinches of dirt as incense. Pilgrim stopped his cloud to hear what he was saying. With his hands folded before his chest, the elder saluted to the sky and said, "*I pray to all mortals of cloud and mist, all deities, and gods of Darkness and Light: may they my good pupil, Pilgrim, assist and grant him vast and boundless magic might.*"

When the Great Sage heard such words, he was moved to even greater diligence. Causing the cloudy luminosity to subside, he drew near and said, "Master, I've returned." The elder took him by the hand and said, "Wukong, you've worked very hard! When you didn't come back after having gone deep into the mountain, I was very worried. Tell me truly what sort of good or evil may we expect in this mountain."

With a smile, Pilgrim replied, "My trip was a successful one this time only because the creatures of the Land in the East are blessed with goodly affinity; and secondly, because the merit and virtue of my master are boundless and limitless; and thirdly, because your disciple has some magic powers." Whereupon he gave a thorough account of how he disguised himself as the Little Wind Cutter, how he was trapped inside the vase, and how he escaped. "Now that I can behold the countenance of my master once more," he said, "I feel like I've gone through another disciple."

Thanking him profusely, the elder asked, "You didn't fight with the monster-spirits this time?"

"No, I didn't," replied Pilgrim. "You can't therefore, escort me across the mountain, can you?" asked the elder.

As he had always been a person who loved to win, Pilgrim began to shout, "What do you mean that I can't escort you across this mountain?"

"You've not quite proven that you can prevail against them," said the elder. "Everything seems so muddled at the moment. How could I dare proceed?"

"Master," replied Pilgrim with a laugh, "you're not very perceptive! As the proverb says, *a little yarn is no thread; a single hand cannot clap*. There are three old demons, thousands and thousands of little fiends, and only one old monkey. How could I possibly fight with them?"

"The few cannot withstand the many," replied the elder. "I quite understand that you can't cope with them all by yourself. But 8 Rules and Sand-monk both have abilities. I'll tell them to go with you, so that your united efforts will sweep clean the mountain path and escort me through it."

"What you say is quite right," said Pilgrim, turning somewhat pensive. "Sand-monk however, should stay here to guard you. Let 8 Rules go with me."

Terribly alarmed, Idiot said, "Elder Brother, you're the one who is imperceptive! I'm rather crude, and I don't have much ability. Even when I walk along, I resist the wind. Of what use am I to you?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "even though you may not have great abilities, you're still another person. As the common folks say, 'Even a fart is additional air!' You can at the very least build up my courage."

"All right! All right!" said 8 Rules. "I hope you'll look after me a bit. When things become tight, don't play tricks on me."

"Do be careful, 8 Rules," said the elder. "Sand-monk and I'll remain here."

Arousing his spirit, Idiot mounted a gust of violent wind with Pilgrim and rode on the fog and the cloud to go up the tall mountain. When they arrived before the door of the cave, they found the door tightly shut and no one in sight. Pilgrim walked forward and, holding his iron rod, cried out in a loud voice, "Fiends, open your door! Come out quickly to fight with old monkey!" When the little fiends in the cave reported this, the old demon was deeply shaken. "The rumour spreading for years about how powerful that ape is," he said, "has been proven true today!"

"Elder Brother, what do you mean?" asked the 2<sup>nd</sup> fiend on 1 side.

The old demon replied, "When that Pilgrim changed into Little Wind Cutter earlier this morning to sneak in here we'd not recognise him. It's fortunate that our third worthy brother spotted him at last and we managed to put him inside the vase. But he'd the ability to drill through the vase and he escaped after he retrieved his clothes. Now he's provoking battle outside. Who's enough courage to face him in the first fight?" To this question of his however, no one made a reply. He asked again but still there was no answer, for everyone inside the cave was playing deaf and dumb. His anger rising, the old demon said, "We're earning ourselves an ugly reputation on the main road to the West. When Pilgrim Sun today can mock us like this and we don't go out to face him in battle, our fame will surely diminish. Let me risk this old life of mine to go have three rounds with him. If I can withstand him for three rounds, the Tang Monk will be the food of our mouths. If I can't, let's close up our door and let them pass." He put on his armour and opened the door to walk out. Pilgrim and 8 Rules stood by the door to stare at him. *He's some fiendish creature indeed! A jewelled helmet topped his iron-hard head with dangling tassels colourful and bright. Like flashing lightning his 2 eyes did glow; shining mist hair on both temples flowed. His claws were like silver, both quick and sharp; saw-like teeth were even and thickset. The armour he wore was one solid gold piece; a smart dragon-head sash wrapped round his waist. His hands held a shiny scimitar of steel: the world rarely saw such heroic might. With 1 bellow loud as a thunderclap he asked, "Who on our door would dare to rap?"*

Turning around, the Great Sage said, "It's your Venerable Dad Sun, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven."

"Are you Pilgrim Sun?" asked the old demon with a laugh. "You audacious ape! I'm not bothering you. Why are you provoking battle here?"

Pilgrim replied, "As the proverb says, *the waves will only rise with the wind; water will subside without the tide*. If you didn't bother me, you think I'd come looking for you? It's because you bunch of thugs and hoodlums have banded together to plot against my master, planning to devour him. That's why I've come to do this."

"You show up at our door in such a menacing manner," said the old demon. "Does that mean that you want to fight?"

"Exactly," replied Pilgrim. "Stop acting with such insolence!" said the old demon. "If I ordered out my fiend troops, placed them in formation, raised the flags, and beat the drums to fight with you, all I'd be doing is to show simply that I'm the local tiger trying to take advantage of you. I'll face you alone, one to one, and no other helper will be permitted." On hearing this, Pilgrim said, "Bullseye Eight Rules, step aside. Let's see what he'll do with old monkey." Idiot indeed walked away to one side.

"You come over here," said the old demon, "and act as my chopping block first. If your bald head can withstand three blows of my scimitar, I'll let you and your Tang Monk go past. But if you can't, you'd better turn him over quickly to me as a meal."

When he heard this, Pilgrim smiled and said, "Fiend! If you've brush and paper in your cave, take them out and I'll sign a contract with you. You can start delivering your blows from today until next year and I'll not regard you seriously!"

Arousing his spirit, the old demon stood firmly with one foot placed in front of the other. He lifted up his scimitar with both hands and brought it down hard on the head of the Great Sage. Great Sage however, jerked his head upward to meet the blow. All they heard was a loud crack but the skin on the head did not even redden. Greatly astonished, the old demon said, "What a hard head this monkey's!"

Chuckling, the Great Sage said, "You don't realise that old monkey's *bom with a bronze head and a crown of steel that no one possessed in Heaven or on Earth. Unbreakable by the mallet or the axe, it's gone in my youth into Laozi's stove. Its making Four Dipper Stars had overseen and Twenty-Eight Lodges applied their work. It'd not be wrecked though drowned a few times for tough sinews circled it all around. Fearing still that it was not strong enough, the Tang Monk added a fillet of gold!*"

"Stop bragging, ape!" said the old demon. "Watch the second blow of my scimitar! It'll not spare your life!"

"Why talk like that?" replied Pilgrim. "Isn't it enough that you hack away?"

"Monkey," said the old demon, "you've no idea that my scimitar's *metal in the furnace forged, wrought by the gods' drawn out work. The fine blade and its mighty power conform to military science. It looks like the tail of a fly and also a white serpent's waist. In the mountain clouds would gather; in the ocean waves would pile high. Pounded and polished countless times, it's been a hundred ways refined. Though it's kept in an ancient cave, it'll win once in battle it's placed. I'll grab that nice, bald, priestly head of yours and make two gourd halves with one mighty whack!*"

"This monster-spirit is so blind!" chuckled the Great Sage. "So, you think that old monkey's head is a gourd! All right. I'll not delay you. You can give me another blow."

The old demon lifted his blade to hack away once more, and again the Great Sage met it with his head. With a loud crack, the head was split in two but the Great Sage also rolled on the ground immediately and changed into two bodies. Terrified by what he saw, the fiend lowered his scimitar. From a distance, 8 Rules saw everything and said, laughing, "The old demon should strike again, and there'll be four persons!" Pointing at Pilgrim, the old demon said, "I've heard that you're capable of the Magic of Body-Division. But why're you exercising it in my presence?"

"What do you mean by the Magic of Body-Division?" asked the Great Sage.

"Why didn't you move when I gave you the first blow?" asked the old demon. "Why did you become two persons after the second one?"

"Fiend, don't be afraid," said the Great Sage, laughing. "If you cut me ten thousand times, I'll give you twenty thousand persons!"

"Monkey," said the old demon, "you may be able to divide your body but I doubt whether you can retrieve your bodies. If you've the ability to become one again, you may give me a blow with your rod."

"No lying, now," said the Great Sage. "You said you wanted to hack me three times with your scimitar, and you've only done it twice. Now you want me to give you a blow with my rod. If I strike you even half a blow more, I'll give up my surname Sun!"

"Well said," replied the old demon.

Dear Great Sage! He embraced the other half of himself and with a roll, became one person again. Picking up his rod, he slammed it down on the old demon who parried the blow with his scimitar and said, "Brazen ape, don't you dare be unruly! What sort of a funeral staff is that that you dare use it to hit someone right before his door?"

"If you ask me about this rod of mine," snapped the Great Sage, "you'd know that it has a reputation both in Heaven and on Earth."

"What kind of reputation?" asked the old demon.

The Great Sage said, "*The rod of steel nine cyclic times refined was forged in the stove by Laozi himself. King Yu took it, named it Treasure Divine to fix the Eight Rivers and Four Seas' depth. In it were spread out tracks of planets and stars, its two ends were clamped in pieces of gold. Its dense patterns would frighten gods and ghosts; on it dragon and phoenix scripts were drawn. Its name was one Rod of Numinous Yang, stored deep in the sea, hardly seen by men. Well-formed and transformed it wanted to fly, emitting bright strands of five-coloured mist. Enlightened Monkey took it back to the mount to experience its power for boundless change. At times I'd make it thick as a drum or small and tiny as an iron wire. Huge like South Mountain or fine as a pin, it lengthened or shortened after my desire. Move it gently and coloured clouds would rise. Like flashing lightning it would soar and fly. Its cold air, far-reaching, would bring you chills; its deadly aura could imbue the sky. To tame tigers and dragons it I kept; with me it toured all four corners of earth. I once disturbed with this rod the Hall of Heaven; its might broke up the Festival of Peach. Fighting it the Deity-King had no chance; against it Naṭa found the task most hard. Struck by the rod, the gods had no place to hide; a hundred thousand soldiers ran and fled. With thunder gods guarding Divine Mists Hall I leaped and fought to Hall of Perfect Light. All flustered were the ministers at court and all divine officers were most confused. I raised my rod to topple the Dipper Hall and turning, smashed the South Pole Palace. When*



Emperor Jade saw how fierce my rod's, Siddhartha's asked to face my wrath. It's natural for a fighter to win or lose but harsh confinement's my certain lot that lasted for five full centuries; then came kind counsels from South Sea's Guanyin. There was, she told me, a priest of Great Tang who offered to Heaven a stupendous vow: to save the souls from the City of Death, he'd seek scriptures from the Spirit Mount. But demons infested the westward way; the journey's thus no convenient trek. Knowing the rod had in the world no match, she begged me to be his guardian on the way. Perverts touched by it'd go to Hades, their bones turning to flour, flesh to dust. Everywhere fiends had died beneath the rod in hundreds and thousands and countless scores. Above, it busted the Dipper Palace; below, it smashed up all of Darkness Hall. In Heaven it chased the Nine Planetoids and wounded on Earth the summoner-judge. It dropped from mid-air to rule mountains and stream s much stronger than Jupiter's New Year sword. To guard the Tang Monk I bank on this rod, having beaten this world's all monster-gods!"

When he heard these words, the demon trembled and shook, though he risked his life and raised the scimitar to strike. Beaming broadly, the Monkey King met him with the iron rod. At first the two of them fought before the cave; after a while, they leaped up to do battle in mid-air. *What a marvellous battle it was! A treasure that fixed Heaven River's depth was the rod, named Compliant, this world's prize. Such vaunting talents the demon displeased who raised his scimitar with magic might. A conflict before the door might one resolve. How any could be spared in a mid-air fight?*

After his own feelings 1 changed his looks; 1's torso grew taller without delay. They fought till clouds thickened in the sky and fog drifted up from the ground. That 1 made plans a few times to devTripitaka; that 1 exercised his vast power to guard the Tang Monk. Because a god wished the scriptures to impart, evil and good became clear, locked in bitter strife. The old demon and the Great Sage fought for over 20 rounds but no decision could be reached. When 8 Rules down below saw however, how intense a battle the two of them were waging, he could no longer stand idly by. Mounting the wind, he leaped into the air and delivered a terrific blow with his rake, aiming it at the monster's face. The demon was horrified, for he did not know that 8 Rules was a blunderer, someone without any real stamina. When he saw that long horn and those huge ears, the demon thought that the hands would also be heavy and the rake vicious. Abandoning his scimitar therefore, he turned and fled in defeat. "Chase him! Chase him!" shouted the Great Sage.

Relying on his companion's authority, Idiot raised high the muckrake and went after the fiend. When the old demon saw him approaching, he stood still before the mountain slope and, facing the wind, changed back into his original form. Opening wide his huge mouth, he wanted to swallow 8 Rules who was so terrified by the sight that he dove quickly into the bushes by the wayside. He crawled in there without regard for thorns or prickles and with no thought of the pain of the scratches on his head; trembling all over, he stayed in the bushes to see what would develop. In a moment, Pilgrim arrived, and the old fiend also opened wide his mouth to try to devour him, little knowing that this was exactly what Pilgrim desired. Putting away his iron rod, Pilgrim ran up to the fiend who swallowed him in one gulp. Idiot in the bushes was so shaken that he muttered to himself, "How stupid's this Ban-Horse-Plague! When you saw the fiend coming to devour you, why didn't you run away? Why did you go up to him instead? You might still be a priest today inside his stomach but tomorrow you'd be a big pile of droppings!"

Only after the demon left in triumph did Idiot crawl out from the bushes and slip away on the road he came. Tripitaka waited with Sand-monk beneath the mountain slope. All of a sudden they saw 8 Rules running back and panting heavily. Horrified, Tripitaka said, "Eight Rules, how is it that you look so desperate? Where's Wukong?"

"Elder Brother's," sobbed Idiot, "been swallowed by the monster-spirit in one gulp." When he heard this, Tripitaka collapsed on the ground, and only after a long time could he stamp his feet and pound his chest. "O disciple!" he cried. "I thought that you're so adept in subduing the fiends that you'd lead me to see God in the Western Heaven. How could I know that you'd perish in the hands of this fiend? Alas! Alas! The merit of this disciple and others have all turned to dust now!"

The master was beside himself with grief. But look at Idiot! Instead of trying to comfort his master he called out, "Sand-monk, bring me the luggage. The two of us will divide it up."

"Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "why do you want to divide it?"

"When we've divided it," replied 8 Rules, "each of us can go our own way; you can return to Flowing Sand River to be a cannibal, and I'll go back to the Old Gao Village to see my wife. We'll sell the white horse, and that should enable us to buy a coffin for our master in his old age!"

The elder was already heaving in anguish. When he heard these words, he began to wail, calling on Heaven to help him all the time and we'll leave him there for the moment. That old demon who thought it a smart thing to have swallowed Pilgrim. When he reached his own cave, the various fiends came to greet him and asked him about the battle. "I caught one," said the old demon.

Delighted, the second demon asked, "Which one did you catch, Big Brother?"

"It's Pilgrim Sun," replied the old demon.

"Where've you caught him?" asked the second demon. The old demon said, "He has been swallowed into my stomach in one gulp."

Horrified, the third demon said, "O Big Brother, I'm sorry I've not told you but Pilgrim Sun is inedible!"

"I'm very edible!" said the Great Sage in the belly. "Moreover, I satisfy! You'll never be hungry again!"

The little fiends were so frightened that one of them said, "Great King, it's terrible! Pilgrim Sun is talking inside your stomach!"

"I'm not afraid of his talking!" said the old demon. "If I've the ability to devour him, you think I've no ability to handle him? Go and boil me some salt water quickly. Let me pour it down my stomach and throw him up. Then we can have him slowly fried and eaten with juice."

The little fiends indeed went and brought back half a pan of hot salt water that the old demon immediately drained. Opening wide his mouth, he retched in earnest but Great Sage seemed to have taken roots in the stomach. He did not even budge. The old demon pressed his own throat and retched repeatedly until he became dizzy and dim of sight. Even his gall seemed to have been busted! But Pilgrim remained unmoveable as ever. After he panted for a while, the old demon cried, "Pilgrim Sun, aren't you coming out?"

"It's too early!" replied Pilgrim. "I don't feel like coming out!"

"Why not?" asked the old demon.

"You're not a very smart monster-spirit!" said Pilgrim. "Since I became a monk, I've led a rather penurious life. It's the cool autumn now and all I've on is an unlined shirt. This belly of yours is quite warm and it's no draft. This is exactly where I'd spend my winter."

On hearing this, all the fiends said, "Great King, Pilgrim Sun wants to spend the winter in your belly."

"If he wants to do that," said the old demon, "I'll practice meditation. With my magic of hibernation, I'll not eat for a whole winter and starve that Ban-Horse-Plague."

"My son," said the Great Sage, "you're so dumb! On this journey in which old monkey is accompanying the Tang Monk to go seek scriptures, we passed through Canton and I picked up a portable frying pan, excellent for cooking chop-suey. 3!f I take time to enjoy your liver, chitterlings, stomach, and lungs, I think I can last easily till spring!"

"O Elder Brother," cried a horrified second demon, "this ape is capable of doing this!"

"O Elder Brother," said the third demon, "it's all right to let him eat the chop-suey but I wonder where he is going to set up the frying pan."

"On the fork of his chest bone, of course!" replied Pilgrim.

"That's bad!" cried the third demon. "If he sets up the pan there and starts a fire, you'll sneeze if the smoke rises to your nostrils, won't you?"

"Don't worry," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Let old monkey punch a hole through his head with my golden-hooped rod. That will serve both as a skylight and a chimney."

On hearing this, the old demon became quite frightened even though he pretended to be brave and said, "Brothers, don't be afraid. Bring me our medicinal juice. I'll drink a few goblets and kill that ape with the drug."

Smiling to himself, Pilgrim said, "When old monkey caused great disturbance in Heaven five centuries ago, he devoured the elixir of Laozi, the juice of the Jade Emperor, the peaches of the Lady Queen Mum, and all kinds of dainties like phoenix marrow and dragon liver. What in fact I've not tasted before? What kind of medicinal juice's this that he dares use to drug me?" After the little fiends went and bailed two pots of the medicinal juice, they filled a large goblet and handed it to the old demon. The moment he took it in his hands however, Great Sage could smell the juice's fragrance even inside the belly of the demon. "I'll not allow him to drink it!" he said to himself. *Dear Great Sage!*

With a twist of his head, he turned his mouth into the shape of a trumpet that he placed immediately below the throat of the old demon. When the old demon drank in one gulp the goblet of juice, it was immediately swallowed by Pilgrim. When he drank the second goblet, too was swallowed by Pilgrim and in this way 7 or 8 goblets went down the throat of the demon. Putting down the goblet, the old demon said, "I'm drinking no more. It used to be that two goblets of this juice would make my stomach feel like fire. I drank seven or eight goblets just now and my face's not even reddened!" But Great Sage could not take too much juice. After he had swallowed 7 or 8 goblet-full from the old demon, he became so delirious that he began to do calisthenics without pause inside the demon's belly. He did jumping jacks and cartwheels; he let loose high kicks; grabbing the liver he used it for a swing and went through handstands and somersaults, prancing madly here and there. So unbearable was the pain that the fiend slumped to the ground.

## 092

### Mind-Spirit dwells at home & demons revert to nature; Wood-Mum together subdues the true self of the fiend

The Great Sage Sun dallied inside the belly of the old demon for quite a while until the latter dropped to the ground, hardly breathing or speaking a word. Thinking that the demon might be dead, the Great Sage released his hold somewhat on the demon's innards and having caught his breath once more, the demon-chief called out, "Most compassionate and merciful Nun, Great Sage Equal to Heaven!"

When he heard that, Pilgrim said, "Son, don't waste your energy! Spare a few words and just address me as Grandpa Sun!" As he had great regard for his own life, that fiendish demon did indeed cry out, "Grandpa, grandpa! It's my fault! I made a terrible mistake in swallowing you, and *now* you're in a position to harm me. I beg the Great Sage to be merciful and have regard for the life-seeking wish of an ant. If you spare my life, I'm willing to send your master across this mountain."

Now, though the Great Sage was a warrior, he thought only of the Tang Monk's progress. When he, a person not unreceptive to compliments, heard how pitifully the fiendish demon was begging him, he became kind-hearted again. "Fiend," he cried, "I'll spare you. But how will you send my master off?"

"We've no silver or gold, pearl or jade, cornelian, coral, crystal, amber, tortoiseshell, or any such precious treasure to give to you," said the old demon. "But we three brothers will carry your master on a palanquin made of scented vines, and that's how we'll send your master across this mountain."

"If you're going to take him across in a palanquin," said Pilgrim, laughing, "that's better than giving us treasures. Open your mouth wide and I'll come out."

The demon chief did open his mouth wide but the third demon walked up to him and whispered, "Big Brother, when he's about to get out, bite down hard. Chew that little monkey to pieces and swallow him. Then he'll be able to torture you no more."

Pilgrim however, heard everything. Instead of crawling out himself, he stuck out his golden-hooped rod ahead of him to see if the way was clear. The fiend gave it a terrific bite; with a loud crack, one of his front teeth broke to pieces. Withdrawing his rod, Pilgrim said, "Dear fiend! I've already spared your life but you want to bite me and kill me instead! I'm not coming out! I'm going to torture you until you drop! No, I'm not coming out!"

"Brother," complained the old demon to the third demon, "you've victimized your own kin! It would have been better if we'd invited him to come out. You told me to bite him instead. He has not been bitten but my teeth have been sorely hurt. What shall we do now?"

When that third demon saw that the blame was put on him, he resorted to the method of "Piquing the General."

"Pilgrim Sun," he cried in a loud voice, "Your fame has been so loudly proclaimed that it strikes the ear like a crack of thunder! I've been told how you displayed your power before the South Heavenly Gate, how you showed your form beneath the Hall of Divine Mists, and how you've subdued monsters and bound demons on the way to the Western Heaven. But you're really nothing but an apish small-timer!"

"In what way am I a small-timer?" asked Pilgrim.

The third fiend said, "As the proverb says, *the valiant stays in the clear; his fame spreads both far and near*. If you come out and let me fight with you, then you may consider yourself a hero. How can you be satisfied with fooling about in someone's stomach? If you're not a small-timer, what're you?"

When Pilgrim heard these words, he thought to himself, "Yes, yes, yes! If I pull his intestines apart and bust up his bladder, I can finish off this fiend right now. What's so difficult about that? Yet that will truly ruin my reputation. All right! All right! You open your mouth wide, and I'll come out to wage a contest with you. But the entrance to your cave is too narrow for us to use our arms. You must get out to a more spacious area." On hearing this, the third demon called up at once all the fiends; young and old, there were more than thirty thousand of those monster-spirits. Each grasping a sharp weapon, they went out of the cave to arrange themselves in the formation of the Three Forces<sup>1</sup> and do battle with Pilgrim once he came out. The second fiend supported the old demon as he walked out of the door, crying, "Pilgrim Sun, if you're a hero, come out! There's a fine battlefield right here for you to fight on."

Even inside the demon's stomach the Great Sage could hear the din and hubbub outside, and he knew that they had arrived at a spacious region. He thought to himself, "If I don't go out, it'll mean that I've gone back on my word. If I do however, I don't know what this monster-spirit with his human face but bestial heart is capable of doing. He said at first that he would send my master across the mountain but actually he was trying to deceive me and bite me. Now he has even ordered his troops here ... All right! All right! I'm going to take care of two things at once for him. I'll go out but I'll plant a root firmly in his stomach." He reached behind him and pulled off a piece of hair from his tail, blew his mortal breath on it, and cried, "Change!" It changed at once into a rope no thicker than a piece

of hair but some four hundred feet long. (The rope would grow thicker once it was exposed to wind.) He fastened one end of the rope to the heart of the monstrous fiend but he left the knot loose enough so as not to hurt the fiend for the moment. Taking hold of the other end, he smiled and said to himself, "Even after I get out, he will have to send my master across the mountain. If he refuses and raises arms against me, I'll not even bother to fight with him. All I need to do is to tug at this little rope, and it'll be as if I'm still in his belly."

He then reduced the size of his own body and began to crawl out; when he reached the lower part of the fiend's throat, he saw that the monster-spirit had opened wide his square mouth with fine teeth standing above and below like rows of sharp swords. Quickly he thought to himself, "That's not good! That's not good! If I leave through his mouth and then try to tug at this rope, he'll bite through it once he begins to hurt. I must get out through some place where he has no teeth." Dear Great Sage!

Dragging the rope along, he crawled further up the throat of the fiend until he entered one of the nasal passages. A sudden itch in the old demon's nose caused him to sneeze loudly and Pilgrim was sneezed right out. The moment Pilgrim was exposed to the wind, he stretched his waist once and immediately grew to some thirty feet tall with one hand holding the rope and the other grasping the iron rod. Not knowing any better, the demon chief, as soon as he saw Pilgrim, lifted up his steel scimitar and hacked away at his opponent's face. Pilgrim parried the blow with one hand holding the iron rod. At the same time, the second fiend, using a lance, and the third fiend, using a halberd, both rushed forward and rained blows on him. Putting away his iron rod and letting the rope hang loose, the Great Sage leaped up to the clouds and dashed away. He was afraid that once the little fiends had surrounded him, he would be unable to carry out his plan. He therefore jumped clear of their camp to reach a spacious spot on the peak of the mountain. Dropping down from the clouds, he grabbed the rope with both hands and tugged with all his strength, and immediately a sharp pain shot through the heart of the old demon. To lessen the pain, the demon clawed his way into the air also but the Great Sage gave his rope another yank. When the little fiends saw what was happening out there, they all cried out: "O Great King! Don't provoke him anymore! Let him go! This little monkey has no sense of the seasons! Clear Brightness<sup>2</sup> hasn't arrived yet but he's flying a kite over there already!" When he heard this, the Great Sage gave the rope yet another mighty tug: hurtling through the air like a spinning wheel, the old demon fell to the ground with a thud, making a crater about two feet deep in the hardened loess beneath the mountain slope.

The second and the third fiends were so terrified that they both dropped down from the clouds and went forward to take hold of the rope. "Great Sage," they pleaded as they both knelt down, "we thought you're a lenient and magnanimous mortal but you're no better than a slippery sneak. We wanted to lure you out to fight with you, and that's the honest truth. How could we know that you'd fasten this rope onto the heart of our elder brother?"

"You bunch of lawless demons," said Pilgrim with a laugh, "you've a lot of nerve! Last time you tried to bite me when you tricked me to come out, and this time you bring up all these troops against me. Look at those thousands of fiend soldiers confronting me, and I'm single-handed! That's not quite reasonable, is it? No, I'm yanking you along! I'm yanking you along to see my master!"

Respecting along with his brothers, the old demon said, "Be merciful, Great Sage. Spare my life, and I'll be willing to send the Venerable Master across this mountain."

"If you want your life," said Pilgrim with another laugh, "all you need to do is to cut the rope with a knife."

"Holy Dad!" said the old demon. "I may be able to cut off the rope but there's still another strip of it fastened to my heart. It's sticking to my throat and making me retch. What shall I do?"

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "open wide your mouth and I'll go in again to untie the rope."

Greatly alarmed, the old demon said, "Once you go in, you might refuse to come out again. That's too hard! That's too hard!" Pilgrim said, "I've the ability to untie the rope from the outside. After I've done so, are you really planning to escort my master across this mountain?"

"The moment you untie it," replied the old demon, "we'll escort him at once. I dare not lie." When he ascertained that the old demon was speaking the truth, the Great Sage shook his body once and retrieved his hair; immediately the fiend felt no pain in his heart. (That was the deceptive magic of the Great Sage Sun when he fastened the demon's heart with a piece of hair. When the hair was retrieved, the fiend's heart no longer ached.)

Leaping up together, the three fiends thanked the Great Sage, saying, "Please go back first, Great Sage, and tell the Tang Monk to pack up his things. We'll bring a palanquin along to escort him." The various fiends all put away their weapons and went back to their cave.

After the Great Sage had put away his rope, he went straight back to the east side of the mountain where from a great distance he could already see the Tang Monk rolling all over the ground and wailing loudly. Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk had the wrap untied and were just in the process of dividing up the contents. "I needn't be told whose doing this is!" sighed Pilgrim to himself. "Eight Rules must have informed Master that I was devoured by the monster-spirit. Master is wailing because he can't bear to part with me but that Idiot is dividing things up so he can run off. Alas, I wonder if I've got the right interpretation! I'll call Master and see what happens." He dropped down from the clouds and cried, "Master!"

On hearing this, Sand-monk at once began to berate 8 Rules, saying, "You're a *sure coffin-maker who does in every taker!* Elder Brother's still alive but you said he's dead so you'd engage in your shoddy business here. Isn't he the one calling now?"

"I clearly saw him being swallowed by the monster-spirit with one gulp," said 8 Rules. "This must be an unlucky day, I suppose, and his spirit has returned to haunt us." Going straight up to him, Pilgrim gave 8 Rules' face a whack that sent him stumbling. "Coolie," he shouted, "am I haunting you?"

Rubbing his face, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, you're devoured by that fiend. You ... how could you come alive again?"

"I'm no useless moron like you!" replied Pilgrim. "So he ate me but I scratched his guts and pinched his lungs. I also put a rope through his heart and pulled at him until the pain was unbearable. Every one of them respected and pleaded with me. Only then did I spare their lives. They are now preparing a palanquin to take our master across this mountain."

When he heard these words, Tripitaka scrambled up at once and saluted to Pilgrim saying, "O disciple! I've caused you great inconvenience! If I'd believed Aware of Ability's words completely, I'd have been finished."

Raising his fists to punch at 8 Rules, Pilgrim scolded him saying, "This overstuffed coolie! He's so slothful and so callow! Master, please worry no more. Those fiends are coming to take you across the mountain."

Even Sand-monk felt embarrassed by these words so much so that he hurriedly offered a few excuses for 8 Rules. They then gathered up the luggage and loaded it once more onto the horse's back, waiting by the wayside. The 3 demon chiefs led the flock of spirits to return to their cave. "Elder Brother," said the 2<sup>nd</sup> fiend, "I thought Pilgrim Sun was someone endowed with nine heads and eight tails but I can see what he actually is – a puny little ape! Nevertheless, you'd not have swallowed him. If we'd just fought with him, he could never have withstood you and me. With these thousands of monster-spirits in our cave, we'd have drowned him just by spitting. But you had to swallow him into your stomach where he could exercise his magic to make you suffer. We certainly didn't dare wage any contest with him then. Just now we said we're planning to escort the Tang Monk. That was all pretence of course because your life was more important than anything else. Once we tricked him into coming out, we'd never escort that monk."

"Worthy brother," said the old demon, "what is your reason for reneging?"

"Give me three thousand little fiends," replied the second fiend, "and put them in battle formation. I've ability enough to capture that ape-head!"

"Don't ask for a mere three thousand," said the old demon. "You've my permission to call up the whole camp! Just catch him, and everyone will have made merit."

The second demon at once called up three thousand little fiends and had them spread out by the side of the main road. A blue banner-carrier was sent to convey this message: "Pilgrim Sun, come out quickly and fight with our Second Dad Great King."

When 8 Rules heard this, he laughed and said, "O Elder Brother! As the proverb says, *a liar can't fool his fellow villager*. What sort of skulduggery and hanky-panky is this when you tell us that you've subdued the monster-spirits, that they are fetching a palanquin to escort Master? Now they are here to provoke battle. Why?"

"The old fiend," said Pilgrim, "was subdued by me. He wouldn't dare show himself, for if he had caught even a whiff of the name Sun, he would have a headache now! This has to be the second fiendish demon who can't stand the thought of escorting us. That's the reason for this challenge to battle. Let me tell you something, Brother. Those monster-spirits happen to be three brothers, and they all behave gallantly toward each other. We're also three brothers but there's no gallantry at all among ourselves. I've already subdued the eldest demon. Now that the second demon has shown himself, the least you can do is to fight with him a bit. Is that too much to ask of you?"

"I'm not scared of him," replied 8 Rules. "Let me go and wage a battle with him."

"If you want to go," said Pilgrim, "go!"

Laughing, 8 Rules said, "O Elder Brother, I'll go. But lend me that little rope of yours."

"What for?" asked Pilgrim. "You don't have the ability to crawl inside his stomach, nor are you capable of fastening it to his heart. Why do you want it?"

"I want it fastened around my waist," said 8 Rules, "as a lifeline! You and Sand-monk should take hold of it at the other end and then let me go out there to do battle. If you see that I'm winning, loosen the rope and I'll be able to capture the monster. If I lose however, you must pull me back, so that he'll be unable to grab me." Pilgrim smiled to himself, saying, "This will be some trick on Idiot!"

He did indeed tie the rope around 8 Rules' waist and urged him to do battle. Lifting high his muckrake, Idiot ran up to the ledge of the mountain and cried, "Monster-spirit, come out and fight with your ancestor Bullseye!"

The blue banner-carrier went quickly to report: "Great King, a priest with a long horn and big ears has arrived."

The second fiend left the camp at once; when he saw 8 Rules, he did not utter a word but lifted his lance to stab at his opponent's face. Idiot went forward to face him with upraised rake, and the two of them joined in battle before the mountain slope. Hardly had they gone for more than seven or eight rounds however, when Idiot's hands grew weak and could no longer withstand the demon. Turning his head quickly, he shouted, "Elder Brother, it's getting bad! Pull the lifeline! Pull the lifeline!"

When the Great Sage on this side heard those words, he slackened the rope instead and let go of it. Idiot was already fleeing in defeat. The rope tied to his waist was no hindrance when he was going forward. But when he turned back, because it was hanging loose it quickly became a stumbling-block and tripped him up. He scrambled up only to fall down again. At first he only stumbled but thereafter he fell horn-first to the ground. Catching up with him, the monster-spirit stretched out his dragon-like trunk and wrapped it around 8 Rules. Then he went back to the cave in triumph, surrounded by the little fiends all reciting victory poems. When Tripitaka below the mountain slope saw what happened, he berated Pilgrim, saying, "Wukong, I can't blame Aware of Ability for cursing you to death. I see that there's no love or amity between you brothers at all, only mutual hatred and envy! He was yelling for you to pull the lifeline. How could you not do that and let go of the rope instead? Now he's been harmed. What shall we do?"

"Master," replied Pilgrim, laughing, "You're always so protective, so partial! All right, when old monkey was taken captive, you didn't show much concern. I was quite dispensable! But no sooner had this Idiot been taken captive than you began to blame me. I want him to suffer a little, for only then will he realise how difficult it is to fetch the scriptures."

"O disciple," said Tripitaka, "you think I wasn't concerned about you when you're captured? But you, after all, are most capable of transforming yourself, and I thought that surely you'd not be harmed. That Idiot however, has a rather cumbersome build, and he's not agile at all. When's he's taken like this, he'll meet more ill than good. You must go rescue him."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "don't complain anymore. Let me go rescue him."

He bounded quickly up the mountain but he said spitefully to himself, "Since Idiot wanted to curse me to death, I'm not about to gratify him so easily. I'll follow the monster-spirits and see how they plan to treat him. Let him suffer a little first, and then I'll rescue him." Thereupon he recited a magic spell; with one shake of his body, he changed into a tiny mole cricket. Darting away, he alighted on the base of one of 8 Rules' ears and went back to the cave with the monster-spirits. The second demon led the three thousand little fiends, all blowing bugles and beating drums, up to the entrance of the cave where they were to be stationed. He himself took 8 Rules inside and said, "Elder Brother, I've caught one."

The old fiend said, "Bring him here and let me have a look."

The second demon loosened his trunk and flung 8 Rules on the ground, saying, "Isn't this the one?"

"This one," said the old fiend, "is quite useless!"

On hearing this, 8 Rules spoke up: "Great King, let the useless one go. Find the useful one instead and catch him."

"Though he may be useless," said the third fiend, "he is still Bullseye 8 Rules, a disciple of the Tang Monk. Let's tie him up and send him to soak in the pond in the back. When his hairs are soaked off, we'll rip open his belly, cure him with salt, and sundry him. He'll be good with juice when it turns cloudy."

Horrified, 8 Rules said, "Finished! Finished! I've run into a fiend who's a pickle merchant."

The various fiends all joined in and had Idiot bull-tied before hauling him to the edge of the pond. After shoving him out toward the centre of the pond, they turned and left. The Great Sage flew up into the air to have a look, and he found Idiot half floating and half submerged in the pond with his four legs turned upward and his horn downward, snorting and blowing water constantly. He was a laughable sight indeed, like one of those huge black lotus roots of late autumn that has cast its seeds after frost. When the Great Sage saw those features, he was moved to both anger and pity. "What am I to do?" he thought to himself. "He is, after all, a member of God's Birthday Feast. But I'm so mad at him, for at the slightest excuse he will divide up the luggage and try to run off. And he's always egging Master on to cast that Tight-Fillet Spell on me. I heard from Sand-monk the other day that he had managed to put away some private savings. I wonder if it's true. Let me give him a scare!"

Dear Great Sage! Flying near 8 Rules' ear, he assumed a different voice and called out: "Bullseye Aware of Ability! Bullseye Aware of Ability!"

"Of all the rotten luck!" mumbled an apprehensive 8 Rules. "Aware of Ability happens to be a name given to me by the Nun Guanshiyin. Since I followed the Tang Monk, I've also been called 8 Rules. How is it that someone at this place should know me as Aware of Ability?" Unable to restrain himself, Idiot asked, "Who is calling me by my religious name?"

"It is I," replied Pilgrim. "Who are you?" asked Idiot, and Pilgrim said, "I'm a summoner."

"Officer," said Idiot, growing more and more alarmed, "where did you come from?"

Pilgrim said, "I've been sent by the Fifth Yama King to summon you."

"Officer," said Idiot, "please go back. Inform the Fifth Yama King that, for the excellent friendship he enjoys with my elder brother, Sun Wukong, I'd be spared one more day. Have me summoned tomorrow."

"Rubbish!" replied Pilgrim. "As the proverb says, *when Yama at third watch wants you to die who dares detain you till fourth watch goes by?* Hurry up and follow me, so I don't have to put the rope on you and pull you along."

"Officer," said Idiot, "I'm asking no big favour of you. Just look at my face. You think I can live? I know I'm going to die but I want to wait one more day – until those monster-spirits have my master and the rest of them captured and brought here. We can then enjoy a last reunion before we all expire."

"All right," said Pilgrim, smiling to himself, "I've about thirty other people here to be rounded up. Let me go get them first, and that'll give you another day. You've any travel money? Give me some." Idiot said, "How pitiable! Where does a person who has left home have any travel money?"

"If not," said Pilgrim, "I'll rope you up and you can follow me!"

"Officer," cried 8 Rules, horrified, "please don't rope me! I know that little rope of yours has the name of the Life-Dispatching Cord. Once you put it on me, I'll breathe my last. Yes! Yes! Yes! I do have a little but not much."

"Where's it?" demanded Pilgrim. "Take it out quickly!"

"Pity! Pity!" replied 8 Rules. "Since I became a priest, I've bumped into a few philanthropic families who wanted to feed the monks. When they saw that I'd a large appetite, they handed me a few pennies more than they gave my companions. Altogether I've managed to save about five maces' of silver but all that loose cash is hard to carry. When I last visited a city, I asked a silversmith to have it forged into a single piece. He turned out to be most unscrupulous, for he stole a few candareens and I was left with a piece of silver weighing but four maces and six candareens. You may take it."

"This Idiot," said Pilgrim to himself, smiling, "doesn't even have a pair of pants on him. Where can he be hiding it?" He asked, "Hey where's your silver?"

"It's stuffed inside my left ear," replied 8 Rules. "I'm all tied up, and I can't get it for you. Take it out yourself."

On hearing this, Pilgrim reached into the ear and found the piece of silver: shaped like a saddle, it did in fact weigh about four mace and six candareen. When he took hold of it, he could no longer refrain from letting out a loud guffaw. Recognising at once that it was the voice of Pilgrim, Idiot, floating in the water, began to let loose a string of abuses. "You damned Ban-Horse-Plague!" he cried.

"I'm in such straits already, and you've to come extort money from me!"

"You overstuffed bull!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "In his attempt to protect master, old monkey's undergone who knows how much affliction. But you even manage to stash away private savings!"

"Shame on you!" replied 8 Rules. "What sort of private savings is this? It's something that has been shaved off my teeth! I'd not bring myself to spend it on my mouth. I was hoping to save it for one garment on my back but you've to scare it out of me. Give me back a little of that silver!"

"Not even half a candareen," answered Pilgrim.

"I'll give it to you as ransom money then," scolded 8 Rules, "but you'd better rescue me."

"Don't be impatient," said Pilgrim. "I'll rescue you."

He put away the silver and changed back into his original form; with the iron rod he teased and guided Idiot in and then hauled him out of the pond by his feet. After he was untied, 8 Rules leaped up and took off his shirt to wring out the water. Shaking it a couple of times, he draped it on his body again, still dripping wet. "Elder Brother," he said, "open the back door and let's scam!"

"Escaping through the back door," said Pilgrim, "is that manly behaviour? Let's fight our way out through the front door." 8 Rules said, "But my feet are numb from being tied up. I can't move."

"Just be quick and follow me," said Pilgrim.

Dear Great Sage! He opened up with his iron rod and fought his way out; 8 Rules, though still feeling the numbness, had no choice but to follow him. When they reached the second-level door, they found the muckrake standing there. Pushing the little fiends aside, 8 Rules grabbed his weapon and began to rain blows left and right. After he and Pilgrim went through those three or four levels of door in this manner, they managed to slaughter countless little fiends. When the old demon heard of it, he said to the second demon, "That's some fine person you've caught! Now look at what Pilgrim Sun has done! He has robbed us of Bullseye 8 Rules and they have struck down the little fiends at our door!"

Leaping up hurriedly, the second demon grasped the lance and ran out of the main gate. "Brazen ape!" he shouted in a loud voice. "You insolent creature! How dare you insult us like this!"

On hearing this, the Great Sage stood still while the fiendish creature without another word, attacked at once with the lance. Pilgrim, the expert (as it were) was not exercised; wielding his iron rod, he faced his opponent head on. Thus the 2 of them began a magnificent battle outside the cave: *an old, yellow-tusked elephant became a man and sworn bond-brother to a lion king. Because the big demon prodded and urged, they all plotted to eat the priest of Tang. Great Sage Equal to Heaven, of vast magic powers would help the Right to quell spirits perverse. Inept 8 Rules fell to malicious hands but Wukong saved him, got him out the door. When the fiend king gave chase, flaunting his strength, rod and lance joined up, each showing its might. The lance of that one came like a python slicing through the woods; the rod of this one soared like a dragon rising from the sea. The dragon, cloud-shrouded, rose from the sea; the python, mist-enwrapped, sliced through the woods. Come to think of it, it was for the Tang Monk that they strove bitterly without restraint.* Though that 8 Rules saw the Great Sage fighting with the monster-spirit, he did not step forward to help his companion at all. Standing the muckrake on the ground at the mouth of the mountain, he merely stood there and stared dumbly at them. When the monster-spirit saw how heavy Pilgrim's rod was, how tautly executed were his thrusts and parries without the slightest hint of weakness or mistake, he blocked the rod with his lance and stretched out his trunk to seize his opponent. Pilgrim however, knew exactly what was happening; raising the golden-hooped rod horizontally high above his own head with both hands, he permitted the monster-spirit to wrap his trunk around his waist but his hands remained free. Look at him! His two hands played with the rod on top of the monster-spirit's trunk like a drum majorette twirling a baton!

When he saw that, 8 Rules beat his chest and cried. "Alas, that monster-spirit's so unfortunate! When he caught hold of a ruffian like me, he had even my hands wrapped up so that I'd not move at all. But when he caught hold of a slippery creature, he didn't bother to wrap up his hands. All those two hands need to do is to jab the rod into his trunk. There'll be pain and snivel in that nostril. How could he hold on to his prisoner?"

Now Pilgrim actually had not thought of doing that but this time 8 Rules managed to give him an idea. Waving the rod once to turn it into a staff over ten feet long and having the thickness of a chicken egg, he jabbed it into the monster's trunk. Horrified, the monster-spirit loosened his hold at once with a loud snort. Pilgrim changed hands and, grabbing hold of the trunk, gave it a mighty tug. To lessen his pain, the monster-spirit walked forward in the direction he was pulled. Only then did 8 Rules have the courage to approach them and rain blows onto the monster-spirit's side with his muckrake.

"No! No!" cried Pilgrim. "You've sharp teeth on your rake. If you puncture his skin and make him bleed, Master will blame us again for hurting life when he sees this. Just hit him with your rake handle."

Accordingly, Idiot lifted the rake handle and gave the monster a blow with each step he took while Pilgrim pulled him in front by the trunk. Like two elephant tenders, they herded the monster down the slope where Tripitaka stood waiting with unblinking eyes. When he caught sight of them approaching noisily, he called out, "Awakened to Purity, can you see what it is that Wukong is dragging along?" Sand-monk took one look and said, smiling, "Master, Big Brother is pulling a monster-spirit by his trunk. What a lovely sight!"

"My goodness! My goodness!" said Tripitaka. "Such a huge monster-spirit! And what a long nose he has! Go and tell him, if he is gracious enough to escort us across this mountain, we'll spare him. We'd not hurt his life."

Hurrying forward to meet them, Sand-monk said in a loud voice, "Master says not to hurt him if that fiend is willing to escort us across this mountain." On hearing this the fiend immediately went to his knees and made a sort of wheezing reply. Since his trunk was gripped by Pilgrim he sounded as if he had a severe cold. "Venerable Dad Tang," he huffed, "if you're willing to spare my life, we'll fetch a palanquin to escort you."

Pilgrim said, "We master and disciples are all gracious winners. We believe you, and we'll spare your life. Go fetch the palanquin quickly. If you change your mind again, we'll certainly not spare you once we capture you." After he had been freed, the fiend respected and left while Pilgrim and 8 Rules gave a full report to the Tang Monk. Overcome by embarrassment, 8 Rules began sunning his clothes in front of the slope to dry them, and we'll leave them for the moment.

The second demon, trembling all over, went back to the cave. Before he arrived, the little fiends had already made the report that he was taken captive and led away by the trunk. In dismay, the old demon and the third demon were just in the process of leading the troops out when they saw the second demon returning alone. After they had welcomed him back and asked him what had happened, the second demon gave them a complete account of the Tang Monk's kind words and the claim of being a gracious winner. As they stared at each other, no one dared speak up for a long time. Then the second demon said, "Elder Brother, are we ready to escort the Tang Monk?"

"What are you saying, Brother?" asked the old demon. "Pilgrim Sun is in truth a kind and benevolent ape. When he was first in my belly, he could have finished me off a thousand times if he wanted to harm me. Just now, when he caught hold of your trunk, he could have given you a lot of trouble if he had refused to set you free and squeezed the tip of your trunk until it was punctured. Let's make the necessary preparations quickly and go escort them."

"Yes, let's escort them! Let's escort them!" said the third demon with a laugh.

"Worthy Brother," said the old demon, "you sound as if you're miffed. If you don't want to escort them, the two of us will go instead."

"Let me inform my two elder brothers," said the third demon, laughing some more. "If those priests did not want us to escort them and simply chose to sneak across this mountain, they would have been lucky. But since they insisted on our escorting them, they would certainly fall into my ploy of 'Seducing the Tiger to Leave Its Mountain.'"

"What do you mean by 'Seducing the Tiger to Leave Its Mountain?'" asked the old fiend.

"Call up all the fiends in our cave," replied the third fiend. "We'll select one thousand from ten thousand of them, one hundred from that thousand, and then sixteen from that hundred. In addition, we want to select thirty more."

"Why is it," asked the old fiend, "that you want to select sixteen little fiends and then thirty more?"

"The thirty little fiends," replied the third demon, "will be selected for their culinary skills. We'll give them some fine rice, thin noodles, bamboo shoots, tea sprouts, fragrant mushrooms, straw mushrooms, bean curds, and wheat glutens, along with the order that they should set up camp at every twenty- or thirty-mile interval to prepare meals for the Tang Monk."

"And what do you want the sixteen fiends for?" asked the old fiend.

"Eight of them will haul the palanquin," said the third fiend, "and eight will shout to clear the way. We three brothers will accompany all of them for a distance. Some four hundred miles west of here will be my city where I'll have my men and horses to relieve us. Once we get near the city, all we need do is this, this, and this, so that those master and disciples will have no chance at all to look after each other. If we want to seize the Tang Monk, we'll have to rely on those sixteen demons to bring us success."

When he heard these words, the old fiend could not have been more pleased; it was as if he indeed had snapped out of a hangover or awakened from a dream. "Marvellous! Marvellous! Marvellous!" he cried, and he at once called together all the fiends. He first selected the thirty members to whom he gave the foodstuff. Then he selected sixteen of them and they were told to haul out a palanquin made of fragrant vines. As they walked out the door, he gave them this instruction also: "You're not permitted to wander off somewhere in the mountain. Pilgrim Sun happens to be a monkey full of suspicions. If he sees all of you milling about, he may suspect something and see through our plot."

Leading the throng up to the side of the main road, the old fiend cried out in a loud voice: "Venerable Dad Tang, today does not clash with the dread day of Red Sand.<sup>4</sup> We're here to invite the Venerable Dad to cross this mountain."

On hearing this, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, who're those people that're calling me?"

Pointing with his finger, Pilgrim said, "That's the monster-spirit old monkey subdued. He's brought a palanquin to escort you."

"My goodness! My goodness!" said Tripitaka, his palms pressed together as he saluted to Heaven. "If it'd not been for the ability of my worthy disciple, how'd I be able to proceed?" He then went forward to salute the various fiends, saying, "I'm greatly beholden to your love. When this disciple returns eastward with the scriptures, he'll proclaim your virtuous fruits to the multitudes of Chang'an."

As they respected, the fiends said, "Let the Venerable Dad ascend the carriage." Being of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, that Tripitaka did not perceive that this was a trick. The Great Sage Sun, too was a golden mortal of the Great Monad who was by nature honest and upright. Since he thought that the experience of captivity and release had truly subdued the fiend, he did not expect any intrigue nor did he examine the situation carefully before he complied with his master's wishes. After telling 8 Rules to load the luggage onto the horse and Sand-monk to follow the rear, he himself took up the lead, his iron rod resting across his shoulders. Eight of the little fiends lifted up the palanquin while eight others shouted to clear the way. With the fiend chiefs supporting the carrying-poles of the palanquin on both sides, the master sat amiably in the middle of the carriage as they took the main road up to the tall mountain. Little did they realise however, that once they were under way, sorrow

would arrive in the midst of gladness. As a Classic says: *At prosperity's end reversal's born. They'll meet Jupiter in their fated hour and baleful spirits of those hung to death!* That group of fiendish demons of course were most united in their efforts to gather around Tripitaka and most diligent in their service to him night and day. Hardly had they travelled 30 miles before they presented him with a vegetarian meal, and when they reached fifty miles, they fed him again. They even stopped before it was quite dark so that the master could rest. Throughout this leg of the journey, the fiends behaved most properly, and the pilgrims in their daily meals were fed to their hearts' content. When they paused to rest, they found a nice place where they could sleep soundly. They proceeded in this manner toward the West for some four hundred miles, and they suddenly found themselves approaching a city. The Great Sage, his iron rod uplifted, was walking about a mile ahead of the entourage, when the sight of that city gave him such a fright that he fell to the ground, hardly able to get up. *Since he had always been so bold, what was it about the sight of that city that so terrified him?* He discovered that the city was full of vicious miasmas. It was *crowded with fiends and monstrous demons; at 4 gates were all rapacious spirits. Their commander was an old striped tiger; captain, a white-faced, ferocious cat. Deer with jagged horns did carry their mail and wily foxes walked along the roads. Circling the city were 1000-foot snakes and huge, long serpents blocked the thoroughfares. Grey wolves barked orders beneath the towers; leopards guarding harbours roared like humans. Those waving flags and beating drums were fiends all; watchmen and patrol, all mountain spirits. Cunning hares opened doors to ply their trade; wild bulls toted their loads to do commerce. This in years past was a great and noble court. Now it's a city of tigers and wolves.* As the Great Sage lay there nursing his fear, he suddenly heard the sound of wind behind his ears. He spun around to discover the third demon with both hands aiming a square-sky halberd directly at his head. Leaping up, the Great Sage wielded his golden-hooped rod to face his adversary. The 2 of them both thoroughly aroused, *huffed and puffed without exchanging a word; clenched their teeth as each wanted to fight.* Then the old demon chief appeared and, after shouting an order, lifted up his steel scimitar to hack at 8 Rules. Hurriedly abandoning the horse, 8 Rules attacked with his muckrake. The second demon also grasped his lance to stab at Sand-monk who parried the blow at once with his fiend-routing staff. Thus three demon chiefs and three monks, each engaging the other, began a most bitter battle right on top of that mountain. Those sixteen little fiends, all obeying the command, immediately went into action: they grabbed the white horse and the luggage before they overpowered Tripitaka in his palanquin, hauling him forward until they reached the edge of the city. "By the scheme of our Dad Great Kings," they shouted, "we've caught the Tang Monk here!" Those monster-spirits in the city, old and young all ran down and opened wide the city gate. At the same time, they immediately gave the order that all the banners should be rolled up and the drums stopped; there were to be no battle cries or the beating of gongs. "The Great King had told us before," they said, "that we're not to frighten the Tang Monk. The Tang Monk couldn't withstand fear for once he's frightened, his flesh would turn sour, and he'd not be good to eat." All those fiends *beckoned Tripitaka in great delight; each saluting, they received the master priest.* They took the Tang Monk and his palanquin and carried him right up to the Hall of Golden Chimes where they invited him to take a seat in the centre and presented him with tea and rice. As they swarmed all over him, the elder was in a daze for not a single person familiar to him met his sight.

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**A horde of demons affront native Nature; the 1 Body salutes True Suchness<sup>1</sup>**

For the moment, the affliction of the Elder Tang. Instead, those 3 demon chiefs, all united in their minds and efforts who were engaged in a strenuous conflict with the Great Sage and his brothers halfway up the mountain east of the city, a battle that was something like *an iron brush scrubbing a copper pan: each party's tough and hard. What a fight! 6 substances and forms, 26 weapons; 6 body features and six sentiments; 6 evils of 6 organs from 6 desires; 3a contest waged on 6 paths – 6 forms of birth. 4In the comforts of spring of 36 Halls, 5each of 6 forms or features6 had a name. This one's golden-hooped rod had thousands of styles; that one's square-sky halberd was fierce in a hundred ways. 8 Rules' muckrake was savage and strong; the 2nd fiend's lance, able and in good form. Young Sand-monk's treasure staff, no common thing had intent to kill; old demon chief's steel scimitar, fine and sharp would spare none, once upraised. These 3 were a true monk's guardians whom none could face; those 3 were brazen wild spirits who mocked both lord and law. At first it was so-so, then the battle turned fierce; when 6 persons all used the magic of flight they each tumbled and turned on the edge of clouds. In a moment the belched out mist and fog darkened Heaven and Earth and all you heard were the growls and roars.* The 6 of them fought for a long time until gradually dusk sett led in; since the sky was already misty and a strong gust was blowing, it became completely dark in no time at all. Now 8 Rules already had huge ears that hovered over his eyes, making the world seem more opaque than ever to him. His arms and legs slackened, and he no longer was able to parry the blows. As he turned to flee in defeat, his muckrake trailing behind him, the old demon gave him a blow with the scimitar that almost took his life. It was fortunate that he missed 8 Rules' head but a few bristles on his neck were shaved off. He was however, chased down by the old demon who opened wide his mouth and caught 8 Rules by the collar. The demon took his prisoner into the city, threw him to the little fiends to have him bound in the Hall of Golden Chimes, and then mounted the clouds once more to join in the battle. When Sand-monk saw that things were going badly, he turned to flee after one last half-hearted blow with his treasure staff. The second fiend flung out his trunk with a snort and wrapped him up, hands and all. He was brought into the city where the little fiends were instructed to have him bound beneath the steps of the hall also. Then the second fiend rose into the air to try to capture Pilgrim. When Pilgrim saw that his two brothers had fallen into captivity, he realised he was unable to oppose three adversaries. As the saying goes, *even a good hand can't withstand 2 fists; and 2 fists can't oppose 4 hands.* With a cry, he broke through the weapons of those three fiendish demons and fled by mounting the cloud somersault. When the third fiend saw Pilgrim somersaulting away, he shook himself and revealed his original form. Flapping both his wings, he immediately caught up with the Great Sage. He could do this so readily. When Pilgrim caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace, even one hundred thousand warriors from Heaven could not catch hold of him, for a single cloud somersault of his would traverse the distance of one hundred and eight thousand miles. But one flap of this monster-spirit's wing however, could cover ninety thousand miles, and thus two flaps in fact would send him past the Great Sage. That was how the Great Sage fell into his clutches. The grip of the fiend was so firm that he could not move left or right at all, nor could he even exercise his magic power to escape; for when he enlarged himself, the fiend's clutch would loosen somewhat, and when he reduced his size, the fiend tightened his grip accordingly. He was thus taken back to the city, dropped to the ground, and he too was bound and placed together with 8 Rules and Sand-monk. As the old demon and the second demon came forward to meet him, the third demon joined them to ascend the treasure hall. *Ah! Little did they realise that they had not bound Pilgrim; it was more like sending him off!*

It was about the hour of the second watch, when all those fiends, after they had greeted each other, pushed the Tang Monk down the steps of the hall. When the lamplight revealed to the elder his 3 disciples all bound up and lying on the ground, he fell down at Pilgrim's side. "O disciple!" he sobbed. "When we met with an ordeal, it's customary for you to exercise your magic powers outside so that you'd seek assistance when necessary to subdue the demons. This time even *you've* been taken. How'd this poor monk lay claim to his life?"

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk heard these words of anguish from their master, they, too began to wail. Pilgrim however, replied with a smile, "Master, relax! And stop crying, brothers! Let them do what they'll but you'll not be harmed. Let the old demons quiet down first and we'll be on our way."

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you're fibbing again! Look at the way I'm tied up! When the ropes are just the least bit loosened, they immediately spit some water on them to make them tighter. A skinny fellow like you probably doesn't feel a thing but that's a plague on a fatso like me! If you don't believe me, just look at my shoulders. The ropes have cut at least two inches into my flesh. How'd we escape?"

"Not to mention the fact that we're bound by hemp ropes," said Pilgrim with a laugh. "Even if they use coir cables as thick as a rice bowl, I'll treat the matter as lightly as an autumn breeze blowing past my ears! You needn't wonder about that!"

As the three brothers were conversing, they also heard the old demon say, "Our Third Worthy Brother is most capable and most intelligent! His marvellous plan did indeed succeed in capturing the Tang Monk! Little ones, five of you'll go bail water; seven of you'll scrub the pots; ten of you'll start the fire; and twenty of you'll go fetch the iron steamer. Let's have those four monks steamed for us brothers to enjoy. We'll give each of you a small piece of their flesh so that you can all attain long life too."

On hearing this, 8 Rules shook all over and said, "Elder Brother, listen to that! That monster-spirit's planning to have us steamed and eaten!"

"Don't be afraid," said Pilgrim. "Let me see if he's a rookie or an old pro of a monster-spirit."

"O Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "stop this idle chitchat! We're about to become neighbours of King Yama, and you're still talking about rookie or old pro!" He had barely finished speaking when they heard the second fiend say, "It's not easy to steam Bullseye 8 Rules."

Delighted, 8 Rules said, "Infinite Light! Who's accumulating secret merit by saying it's not easy to steam me?"

"If it isn't," said the third fiend, "let's skin him first before we steam him." Horrified, 8 Rules yelled, "Don't skin me! I may be coarse but the moment the water gurgles, I'll turn soft!" The old fiend said,

"The one not easily steamed should be placed in the bottom layer."

"Don't be afraid, 8 Rules," said Pilgrim, laughing. "He's a rookie, not an old pro."

"How do you know?" asked Sand-monk.

Pilgrim said, "Whenever you steam anything, the stuff placed on top always gets done first. That's why you always put the toughest foodstuff in the top layer of the steamer; build up the fire until the hottest steam gets up there, and everything will be fine. But if it is placed in the bottom layer where the steam doesn't get through that easily, you can steam the stuff for half a year and it still may not be cooked. He said just now that 8 Rules was not easy to steam but he still wanted to put him in the bottom layer. Isn't he a rookie?"

"O Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules. "The way you talk, you sound as if you wanted me to be tortured alive! When they are hard-pressed and see that I'm not fully steamed, they'll pull off the steamer, flip me over, and build up the fire again. I'll then be cooked on both sides but still raw inside, won't I?"

As they were thus conversing, one of the little fiends went up to report: "The water's boiling."

The old fiend gave the order at once for the various fiends to haul 8 Rules into the bottom layer and Sand-monk into the second. Suspecting that he would be next, Pilgrim decided it was time to leave, saying to himself, "I'd be able to do something by this lamplight!" He pulled off a piece of hair and blew his mortal breath onto it, crying, "Change!" It changed at once into a Pilgrim bound by the hemp ropes. His true body rose with his spirit into the air where he stood still and peered downward. Those fiends, of course, could not tell the true from the false: the moment they came upon the false Pilgrim, they lifted him up and placed him inside the 3rd layer. Only then did they push the Tang Monk to the ground, bull-tie him, and place him in the fourth layer. Fuelled by dried wood, a terrific blaze soon flared up. Perched on the edge of the clouds, the Great Sage sighed to himself, "That Eight Rules and Sand-monk of mine can still manage to withstand perhaps two seconds of boiling. But my master, all it takes is one second and he'll turn soft! If I don't use magic to save him, he'll perish this instant!" *Dear Pilgrim!* Making the magic sign in mid-air, he recited: *"Let Ohm and Ram purify the religion realm; Key: Primary Reception Beneficial for Determination."*<sup>7</sup>

This spell at once caused the Dragon King of North Sea to arrive in the midst of a dark cloud, crying, "Aoshun, the little dragon from North Sea respects you."

"Please rise! Please rise!" said Pilgrim. "I'd not have bothered you without cause. I came here with Master Tang who was caught by these vicious demons. He has been placed inside that iron steamer to be steamed. Please go and give him some protection so that he'll not be destroyed." The dragon king immediately changed himself into a cold gust of wind that blew toward the large pan. As it circled and coiled around the bottom of the pan, the three inside the steamer felt no heat at all, and that was how their lives were preserved.

Toward the end of the hour of the third watch, the old demon was heard saying, "Subordinates, we plotted and strained ourselves in order to catch the Tang Monk and his three companions but that effort in escorting them cost us four sleepless days and nights. Now that they are bound inside the steamer, I doubt that they will be able to escape. All of you however, should take good care in guarding them, and ten of you little fiends should take turns in tending the fire. Let us retire to our bedchambers and rest a little. By the fifth watch, when it's about dawn, they will certainly be soft ened. You may prepare minced garlic, salt, and vinegar and awake us for the feast." The fiends all obeyed this instruction while the three demon chiefs went to their bedrooms.

Standing on the edge of the clouds, Pilgrim heard everything clearly. He then lowered the direction of his cloud slightly but he could hear no voices coming from the steamer. "When the fire is built up," he thought to himself, "there must be heat. Why aren't they afraid of it? And there's not a word from them? Ha, could they be dead already? I'd go nearer and listen again." Dear Great Sage! As he trod the clouds, he shook his body and changed immediately into a little black fly to alight on the trellised frame of the steamer.

"What rotten luck! What rotten luck!" he heard 8 Rules mumbling inside. "I wonder if we're being steamed the stuffy or the airy way."

"What do you mean by that, Second Elder Brother?" asked Sand-monk.

"The stuffy way," replied 8 Rules, "the cover of the steamer will be put on. The airy way, the cover won't be used."

"Disciples," answered Tripitaka from the very top layer, "the steamer hasn't been covered."

"How lucky!" exclaimed 8 Rules. "We're not going to die yet tonight. This is steaming the airy way."

When Pilgrim heard them speaking like that, he knew that they had not been harmed. Flying up, he picked up the cover of the iron steamer and gently put it on. "Disciples," said a horrified Tripitaka, "it's covered now!"

"We're finished!" said 8 Rules. "This is steaming the stuffy way. This night we'll die for sure!"

Whereupon Sand-monk and the elder began to weep. "Let's not cry just yet," said 8 Rules. "I think a fresh batch of fiends have come to tend the fire."

"How do you know?" asked Sand-monk. "When we're first placed in the steamer," said 8 Rules, "it was an ideal situation for me. I'm suffering from a little arthritis, and I want that hot steam. Right now however, there seems to be cold air coming up from the pan instead. Hey, you officers tending the fire! Why don't you add some wood? What are you good for?"

"This coolie!" said Pilgrim to himself, unable to restrain a giggle. "Doesn't he know that he can withstand the chill but heat will kill him? If he talks any more like that, everything will be revealed. I must hurry and rescue him. But wait! To rescue him I must change back into my true form. When those ten fiends tending the fire see me, they will certainly make a raucous noise and disturb the old fiends.

Wouldn't that be a nuisance? Let me send them a little of my magic; I remember that when I was a Great Sage in Heaven, I once had a game of finger-guessing with The Upholder of the Nation at the North Heaven Gate.<sup>8</sup> I won some sleep-inducing insects from him, and I still have a few of them here. Let me give them to the fiends." He felt around his waist and found that he had a dozen of those insects left. "I'm going to send them ten of these," he said to himself, "and I'll keep two for breeding."

He flung the insects on the faces of those little fiends; as soon as they crawled into their nostrils, the fiends began to snore and fell asleep. One of them however, was in charge of the fire fork and could not be induced to sleep soundly. Rubbing his head and face, this little fiend pinched and tweaked his own nose left and right, sneezing constantly. "This fellow," said Pilgrim, "seems to know the business! I'll give him a 'Double-Handled Lamp.'" He threw 1 more insect on the fiend's face, thinking to himself: "With two insects running in and out of his nostrils at least one should pacify him!" After 2 or 3 huge yawns, that little fiend stretched, abandoned his fire tong, and fell fast asleep without moving again. "This little magic's," said Pilgrim to himself, "truly both marvellous and efficacious!" He changed back into his original form to walk near the steamer, crying, "Master!"

On hearing this, the Tang Monk said, "Wukong, save me!"

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "are you calling from the outside?"

"If I'm not outside," said Pilgrim, "you think I'm suffering with you inside?"

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "it's always the same! The slippery one will slip away but we're left behind to suffocate in here!"

"Don't make so much noise, Idiot," said Pilgrim, laughing. "I'm here to rescue you."

"If you want to rescue me, Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "you must do a thorough job of it. Don't let them put me back in the steamer!"

Pilgrim then lifted up the cover and untied his master. After shaking himself to retrieve his hair that had changed into the specious Pilgrim, he went through the other 2 layers to free Sand-monk and 8 Rules. The moment he was untied, Idiot wanted to flee. "Don't be in such a hurry! Don't be in such a hurry!" said Pilgrim and recited a spell to dismiss the dragon god. Finally he said to 8 Rules, "There're still tall mountains and rugged peaks in the rest of our journey to the Western Heaven. Without a beast of burden, Master will find it exceedingly difficult to proceed. I must still go get our horse." *Look at him!* With nimble hands and feet, he dashed inside the Hall of Golden Chimes where he saw that the various fiends, old and young, were all asleep. Without disturbing any of them, he managed to untie the reins. Now, that animal was originally a dragon horse; if someone unfamiliar had untied him, he would have let fly both his hind legs and neighed. But Pilgrim had been a stableman; in fact, he had received the rank of Pi-ma-wên. Moreover, the horse recognised him; so he neither kicked nor neighed. Quietly leading him forward, Pilgrim tightened the girth and fixed up the saddle properly before asking his master to mount. After the elder, still trembling all over, had climbed onto the horse, he too wanted to leave at once. "Let's not hurry," said Pilgrim. "There are kings out there on the road to the west. We must have our travel receipt before we can proceed. Otherwise, what sort of passport do we've? Let me go find the luggage."

"I recall," the Tang Monk said, "that after we entered the door, these fiends placed our luggage to the left of the main hall. Even the pole is standing there below the steps."

"I know," replied Pilgrim.

He bounded into the treasure hall to look, and all at once he caught sight of flashes of light that made him realise that the luggage was there. He knew because the Tang Monk's brocaded cassock had on it the luminescent pearl<sup>9</sup> that glowed at night. As Pilgrim drew near, he saw that both the luggage and the pole were untouched. He brought them out quickly and told Sand-monk to pick up the pole. With 8 Rules leading the horse and Pilgrim the way, they headed straight for the Central Gate of the Sun in front. Soon however, the loud rattle of sentinel bells could be heard, and they saw that the door had a lock, and a seal was taped over the lock. "How could we penetrate this kind of defence?" asked Pilgrim. "Let's go to the back door instead," said 8 Rules.

Pilgrim led the way toward the back door, only to return with this observation: "I can hear sentinel bells outside the Rear Gate of the Servants as well, and that door too is locked and sealed. What shall we do? In such a situation, if it hadn't been for the mortal frame of the Tang Monk, the three of us could certainly escape by mounting the clouds and wind, regardless of where we're. But the Tang Monk has yet to transcend the three realms, for he still appears within the world of the five phases. His whole body has nothing but carnal bones bequeathed by his parents. He can't rise into the air. It'll be hard for us to escape."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "there's no need for further talk. Let's find some place where there are no sentinel bells or guards. We'll lift Master up the wall and let him climb over it."

"That's not so good," replied Pilgrim, laughing. "Right now we may be forced to drag him over the wall like that but when we return with the scriptures, I'm afraid that your loose idiotic mouth will be spreading word everywhere that we're wall-climbing priests!"<sup>10</sup> "But you can't worry about behaviour now!" said 8 Rules. "We've got to flee for our lives!" Pilgrim had little choice but to agree with him; they located a section of the wall that was unguarded and began to scale it.

Alas, this was what had to happen! The star of calamity, as it were, had refused to release Tripitaka. As those three demon chiefs slept in their chambers, they were suddenly awakened by some commotion about the Tang Monk having escaped. Dressing hurriedly, they all ascended to the treasure hall and shouted the question, "How many times has the water boiled?"

Those little fiends tending the fire who had been put out by the sleep-inducing insects were sleeping so soundly that they could not be awakened even when beaten. Several others who had no particular responsibilities, started up and answered confusedly, "Se-se-se-seven times!" As they ran up to the pan however, they saw that the several layers of the steamer were all thrown on the ground while those supposed to tend the fire were still fast asleep. Horrified, the little fiends ran back to report, "Great King, they ... they ... they've escaped!"

Hurrying down the hall, the three demon chiefs went forward to take a careful look at the pan: indeed they discovered that the layers of the steamer were strewn on the ground while both water and pan had turned cold because the fire was about to die out. Those tending the fire however, were still snoring away. So astonished were the various fiends that they all shouted: "Seize the Tang Monk quickly! Seize the Tang Monk quickly!"

All that hubbub immediately aroused the rest of the monster-spirits, old and young. Clutching cutlasses and lances, they swarmed from front and back up to the Central Gate of the Sun where they found that neither lock nor seal had been touched, and heard the continuous rattle of the sentinel bells. They asked those on night patrol outside the door, "Where did the Tang Monk escape?" The reply was that no one had come through the door. When they then rushed to the Rear Gate of the Servants, again they found that the seal, the lock, and the sentinel bells were like those out in front. The entire throng then spread out with torches and lanterns, lighting up the whole place until it was bright as day, and then they caught clear sight of the four pilgrims attempting to scale the wall.

"Where are you running?" roared the old demon as he dashed up to them. His legs weakened and his tendons numbed by fear, the elder fell down at once from the wall and was caught by the old demon. While the second demon seized Sand-monk and the third demon pinned down 8 Rules, the rest of the fiends took the luggage and the white horse. Only Pilgrim managed to escape. "Damn him! Damn him!" muttered 8 Rules as he was caught. "I told him to do a thorough job of rescuing us. Now it's back to the steamer for us!"

The various demons took the pilgrims back to the main hall but they did not want to steam them anymore. Instead, 8 Rules was tied to a pillar in front of the hall, and Sand-monk was taken to be bound to a pillar at the rear of the hall. The old demon however, held on to the Tang Monk and refused to let go. "Big Brother," said the third fiend, "why are you holding him like that? Are you going to swallow him alive? But that'll take all the pleasure out of eating, for this creature can't be compared with those foolish, common mortals that you can devour as a meal. He's a rare creature from a superior state. You must take time, when you've the leisure, to prepare him like a gourmet dish. And you eat him to the accompaniment of good game, fine juices, and soft poems."

"What you say is quite right, of course, Worthy Brother," said the old demon, smiling, "but in the meantime Pilgrim Sun will sneak back in here to steal him."

"In this palace of mine," said the third demon, "there is a pavilion of brocade-fragrance,<sup>11</sup> inside which there is also an iron chest. Listen to me: hide the Tang Monk in the chest and close up the pavilion. Spread the rumour – so that the little fiends all over our city will be talking about it – that the Tang Monk has been devoured alive by us. Undoubtedly that Pilgrim will come back to snoop around; when he hears the news, he will lose all hope and leave. After four or five days, when he's stopped coming back to harass us, we can then take out the Tang Monk and enjoy him at our leisure. How about that?"

Highly pleased, both the old and second fiends said, "Yes! Yes! Yes! What our brother said makes perfect sense!"

And so they put the poor Tang Monk that very night into the iron chest after which the pavilion was closed. The rumour that he had been eaten alive soon spread through the entire city. Instead Pilgrim who had to abandon the Tang Monk in the middle of the night and mount the clouds to escape. He went straight to the Lion-Camel Cave instead, attacked persistently with his rod, and succeeded in killing all ten thousand plus of those little fiends. Then he hurried back; when he reached the edge of the city, the sun was just rising in the east. He dared not however, provoke battle. *For 1 silk fibre is no thread; a single hand cannot clap.* As he descended from the clouds, he shook his body once and changed into a little fiend to steal into the city. Through large boulevards and small alleys he tried to learn what was happening, and all he heard was: "The Tang Monk has been devoured live by the great kings during the night." Wherever he went in the city, that was the news he was told. Becoming more anxious, Pilgrim strode to the Hall of Golden Chimes to look around, and he saw many spirits in front of the hall, all wearing leather caps dusted with gold, and yellow cloth jackets. With red-lacquered wooden staffs in their hands and ivory plaques dangling from their waists, they were marching back and forth. Pilgrim thought to himself, "These must be monster-spirits authorized to work in the palace. I'll change into one of them to snoop around inside."

Dear Great Sage! He really did change into an exact version of one of those fiends and sneaked inside. As he walked about, he caught sight of 8 Rules tied to one of the pillars in front of the hall and moaning. Pilgrim drew near and whispered, "Aware of Ability." Recognising his voice, Idiot said, "Elder Brother, are you here? Please rescue me."

"I'll," replied Pilgrim, "but do you know where Master is?"

"Master's gone!" said 8 Rules. "Last night he was eaten alive by those monster-spirits." When he heard these words, Pilgrim let out a sob, and tears poured from his eyes.

"Elder Brother, don't cry," said 8 Rules. "I only heard the wild talk of the little fiends but I didn't see it with my own eyes. Don't let yourself be fooled. You'd do some more investigating." Only then did Pilgrim stop weeping and walk further inside to investigate. There he saw Sand-monk tied to one of the pillars in the rear of the hall. He approached him at once, rubbed Sand-monk's chest with his hand, and said "Awakened to Purity."

Sand-monk, too, recognised his voice and said, "Elder Brother, did you come in through transformation? Please save me! Save me!"

"Saving you is easy," replied Pilgrim. "But do you know where Master is?"

As tears dripped from his eyes, Sand-monk said, "O Elder Brother! The monster-spirits couldn't wait to steam Master. He's eaten alive!"

When the Great Sage heard that the words of both his brothers were the same, he felt as if a knife had run through his heart. Not even bothering to rescue 8 Rules and Sand-monk, he leaped at once into the air and went back to the mountain east of the city. As he dropped down from the clouds, he broke into loud wailing crying, "O Master! *When mocking Heaven, I landed in the snare, you came to free me from my great despair. To seek a god we set our heart and mind; ourselves we trained and demons we refined. I didn't know this day you'd meet with harm. Now I can't take you to the wondrous palm.* "<sup>12</sup>*It's not your lot to reach the blessed West. What can I do when spirit leaves your chest?*"

As Pilgrim was grieving in this manner, he thought to himself, questioning mind with mind: "This has to be all the fault of our God Siddhartha! Sitting idly in that region of ultimate bliss, he had nothing better to do than to dream up those three baskets of scriptures! If he truly cared about the proclamation of virtue, he should have sent the scriptures to the Land of the East. Wouldn't his name then be an everlasting glory? But he wouldn't part with them so readily, and all he knew was to ask us to go seek them. Who would expect that Master, after the painful experience of a thousand mountains, would lose his life at this miserable place? All right! All right! All right! Let old monkey mount his cloud somersault to visit Siddhartha and tell him about this. If he's willing to let me send the scriptures to the Land of the East, it'll still mean the proclamation of the virtuous fruit in the first place and the fulfilment of our vow in the second. But if he's unwilling, I'll ask him to recite the Loose-Fillet Spell to release me from this band. Old monkey will hand it back to him, go back to his own cave, and play king once more." *Dear Great Sage!* Leaping up at once, he mounted his cloud somersault to head straight for India. It was hardly an hour before the Spirit Mountain came into view. In a moment, he dropped down from the clouds to land on the Vulture Peak where he was immediately met by the 4 Great Diamond Guardians crying, "Where're you going?" Saluting them, Pilgrim said, "I must see Siddhartha on some business."

"This ape's," snapped the Diamond Guardian Ever Abiding, the indestructible king of the Golden Beam Summit on Kunlun Mountain, "a lot of gall! You've yet to thank us for exerting ourselves on your behalf some time ago when we restrained the Bull-Demon."<sup>13</sup>But there's hardly even any show of courtesy when you see us today. If you've some business, we must make the report first and may enter only when you're summoned. This isn't the same as the South Heavenly Gate where you can rush in and out at will. Bah! Aren't you going to step aside?"

Now the Great Sage was already sorely distressed. When he received this affront, he became so incensed that he thundered forth his protests that soon reached the ears of Siddhartha. Our Religious Patriarch was sitting solemnly on the lotus throne of nine grades and discussing the *Threads* with the Arhats of Eighteen Heavens. He said to them, "Sun Wukong's arrived. All of you go out and usher him in here."

Obedying this decree of God, the Arhats with 2 rows of sacred banners and treasure canopies went outside and intoned: "Great Sage Sun, our Siddhartha has issued a summons for you."

Only then did those 4 Great Diamond Guardians step aside to allow Pilgrim to enter the monastery. After being led by the Arhats up to the treasure lotus platform, he saluted himself before Siddhartha as 2 streams of tears coursed down his cheeks. "Wukong," said Siddhartha, "why're you weeping so sadly?"

"By the grace of your teachings vouchsafed repeatedly to him," replied Pilgrim, "this disciple has entered the gate of Holy Dad God. Since I returned to the right fruit, I became the protector of the Tang Monk, honouring him as my teacher and sustaining unspeakable hardships on our journey. The moment we arrived at the Lion-Camel City of the Lion-Camel Mountain, three vicious demons – they're a lion king, an elephant king, and a great roc – had my master captured. Even your disciple became their prisoner, and we're all bound inside a steamer to suffer the affliction of water and fire. Fortunately your disciple managed to escape and call up the dragon king for assistance. That night we stole out with Master but, unable to shake loose from the star of calamity, we're taken prisoners again. By



morning, when I stole into the city to try to get some news, I learned that these vicious demons had devoured my master alive during the night. Not a single piece of his flesh or bone was left behind! I saw only my younger brothers Aware of Ability and Awakened to Purity who were bound there also. They too will soon lose their lives, I suppose. Your disciple had no choice but to come here to plead with Siddhartha. I beg you in your great compassion to recite the Loose-Fillet Spell and take off this band from my head. It will be returned to Siddhartha, and your disciple will be released once more to frolic on the Flower-Fruit Mountain.” Hardly had he finished speaking when his tears streamed forth, as he sobbed uncontrollably.

“Wukong,” said Siddhartha with a smile, “don’t be so sad. You’re hurting because one of those monster-spirits has vast magic powers and you can’t prevail against him.” Kneeling beneath God’s throne and pounding his chest, Pilgrim said, “To tell you the truth, this disciple in years past brought great disturbance to the Celestial Palace and assumed the name of Great Sage. Since I acquired the way of humanity, I’ve never suffered loss but this time I’m the victim of this vicious demon!”

On hearing this Siddhartha said, “Cease your anguish. I do recognise that monster-spirit.”

All at once Pilgrim blurted out, “Siddhartha! I’ve heard people say that that monster-spirit is related to you!”

“This insolent ape!” said Siddhartha. “How could a monster-spirit be related to me?”

“If not,” replied Pilgrim with a laugh, “how could you recognise him?”

“By my eyes of wisdom,” said Siddhartha, “that’s how I recognise all three of them. The old fiend and the second fiend both have their proper masters. Ānanda and Kāśyapa, come! The two of you’ll mount the clouds and go your separate ways to Mount Five-Platforms and Mount Emei. Summon the Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness and Auspicious-World to come for an audience.”

The 2 honoured ones departed at once with the decree. “The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness and Auspicious-World,” said Siddhartha, “are the proper masters of those two fiends. But now that you mention it, the third fiend’s indeed somewhat related to me.”

“On the paternal party,” asked Pilgrim, “or the maternal one?”

Siddhartha said, “At the time when Chaos parted, Heaven opened at the epoch of *Zi*, Earth developed at the epoch of *Chou*, and Man came into existence at the epoch of *Yin*. *When Heaven and Earth mated, then myriad things were born*. The myriad things consisted of beasts and fowl: of the beasts, the unicorn’s the head and the phoenix’s the head of the fowl. After having been fertilised by the aura of procreation, the phoenix also gave birth to the peacock and the great roc. When the peacock first came into the world, it’s a most savage creature, able to devour humans. In fact, it’d suck in a human being with one breath from a distance of some forty miles. I was on top of the Snow Mountain having just perfected my sixteen-foot diamond body when the peacock sucked me into his stomach. I’d have escaped through his anal passage but fearing that my body might be defiled, I cut my way out through his back and rode him back to the Spirit Mountain. I was about to take his life but the various Gods stopped me with the observation that to hurt the peacock would be like hurting my own mum. That’s why I detained him at the mountain instead and appointed him God-Mum, the Nun Great-Queen Mayūra.<sup>14</sup> Since the great roc had the same parent as the peacock, it’d be said that he’s somewhat related to me.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim said with a smile, “Siddhartha, according to what you’ve told me, you’d be regarded as the nephew of that monster-spirit!”

“Only my presence, I fear, will bring that fiend to submission,” said Siddhartha. Touching his head to the ground, Pilgrim said, “I beg you to make this journey at once.”

Siddhartha left the lotus throne and went out of the monastery gate with the rest of the gods. There they saw Ānanda and Kāśyapa leading The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness and Auspicious-World on their way to the monastery also. As the two Nuns saluted to him, Siddhartha asked, “How long have your beasts of burden been gone from your mountains?”

“A week,” replied The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness.

“A week in the mountain,” said Siddhartha, “are equivalent to several millennia on earth. I wonder how many lives they’ve taken down there. You must follow me quickly if we’re to retrieve them.”

With 1 Nun standing on each side of him, a god and his followers rose into the air. See *auspicious clouds adrift in all the sky as God in mercy his wisdom<sup>15</sup> doth ply: he shows forth Heaven’s law of procreation, explaining Earth’s patterned transformation. Before his face 500 Arhats stand; behind 3000 guardians form a band. Ānanda, Kāśyapa follow left and right; Mañ and Viśva the monstrous fiends will smite*. It was as a peculiar favour granted him that the Great Sage succeeded in eliciting the assistance of the Religious Patriarch and his followers. In a little while, they caught sight of the city. “Siddhartha,” said Pilgrim, “the spot releasing black vapours over there is the Lion-Camel Kingdom.”

“Go down first,” said Siddhartha, “and provoke battle with those monster-spirits. You’re permitted to lose but not to win. When you retreat back here, I’ll bring them to submission.”

The Great Sage lowered his cloud and landed on the city wall; his feet planted on the melons of the battlement, he shouted, “Damned lawless beasts! Come out quickly to fight with old monkey!” Those little fiends standing on the rampart were so terrified that they dashed down to report: “Great Kings, Pilgrim Sun is provoking battle on the battlement!”

“This ape hasn’t shown himself for about two days,” said the old fiend. “If he returns to provoke battle this morning, could it be that he has succeeded in getting some help?”

“We’re not afraid of whatever help he has gotten, are we?” said the third demon. “Let’s all go and have a look.” Each grasping his weapon, the three demon chiefs rushed up to the battlement. When they saw Pilgrim, they raised their arms without a word and attacked. Pilgrim wielded his iron rod to meet them; after seven or eight rounds however, he feigned defeat and fled with the fiend kings all roaring, “Where are you going?”

The Great Sage shot up to mid-air with one somersault but those three spirits all mounted the clouds to give chase. Immediately Pilgrim hurled himself into the golden radiance of Dad God and vanished from sight. What did appear were the three images of God – Past, Present, and Future – together with five hundred Arhats and three thousand guardians who fanned out on all sides. They had the three fiend kings surrounded so tightly that not even water could have seeped through!

“Brothers, it’s bad!” cried the old demon, completely unnerved. “This monkey is truly a devil in the earth! How did he manage to bring our masters here?”

“Don’t be frightened, Big Brother,” said the third demon. “We’ll all go forward together and use our weapons to cut down that Siddhartha and take over his Thunderclap Treasure Monastery.”

Not knowing any better, our demon chief accordingly charged forward and tried to attack madly with his scimitar. The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness and Viśabhadra, after quickly reciting a magic spell, shouted in unison, “If these cursed beasts do not submit now, are they waiting for another disciple?” The old fiend and the second fiend were so terror-stricken that they dared not struggle any longer. Dropping their weapons, they rolled over once and changed back into their original forms. The two Nuns tossed two lotus thrones onto their backs and then leaped up to take their seats on top. In this way, the two fiends lowered their ears and submitted.

Since the two Nuns had thus subdued the green lion and the white elephant, only the third demon refused to surrender. Throwing away his halberd, the fiend spread out his wings and soared into the air, his sharp claws seeking to strike at the Monkey King. The Great Sage was still hiding in the luminosity around a god, and the fiend actually had no way of getting near him, though he would have liked very much to do so. Perceiving the roc’s intentions, Siddhartha faced the wind and gave his head (which had once supported the nests of magpies)<sup>16</sup> a shake. The head changed at once into a piece of meat dripping with fresh blood. Stretching out his claws, the monster-spirit drew near and tried to clutch at the piece of meat. Our Dad God pointed at him with his finger and immediately the monster-spirit felt such cramps throughout his huge wings that he could not fly away. All he could do was to hover over a god’s head in his true form: a golden-winged great roc.

“Siddhartha,” he cried, “why did you exercise your mighty religion power to constrain me?”

“Your wickedness,” replied Siddhartha, “has incurred for you a heavy debt of retribution in this place. Follow me, and you may acquire merit beneficial to you.”

“But your place allows for only a strict vegetarian diet,” said the monster-spirit. “It’s a condition of extreme poverty and hardship. I can enjoy human flesh here to my endless delight. If you starve and destroy me, you’ll have sinned, too.”

“In the four great continents of my domain,” said Siddhartha, “there are countless worshippers. I’ll ask those who wish to do good to sacrifice first to your mouth.” Since that great roc could neither flee nor escape, though he sorely wished to do so, he had no choice but to make submission.

Only then did Pilgrim step out of the golden radiance to respect to Siddhartha saying, “Dad God, you’ve put away the monster-spirits and eliminated great evils. But my master’s gone.”

“Wretched ape!” said the great roc through clenched teeth, “You’d to find such a cruel fellow to constrain me! Since when did we devour that old priest of yours? He’s still hidden in an iron chest at the pavilion of brocade-fragrance.”

When Pilgrim heard these words, he respected hurriedly to thank the Religious Patriarch who had the roc firmly detained on top of his halo as a guardian. Then the entire entourage left on the clouds to return to the treasure monastery. Pilgrim lowered himself from the clouds and entered the city where he could find not a single little fiend. So it was that a *snake without head would not crawl; a bird without wings could not fly*. When they saw that the fiend kings had made submission to the Religious Patriarch, each of them fled for his life. Pilgrim released 8 Rules and Sand-monk and also found the luggage and the horse. “Master’s not been eaten,” he said to the 2 of them. “Follow me!”

He led his 2 brothers to the interior court and found the pavilion of brocade-fragrance. Opening the door, they located the iron chest inside of which they could hear the sound of Tripitaka weeping. Wedging open the chest with his fiend-routing staff, Sand-monk called out: “Master!”

When he saw them, Tripitaka wailed aloud: “O disciples! How did you manage to subdue the demons? How did you find me here?” Thereupon Pilgrim gave a thorough rehearsal of what had taken place, from beginning to end, and Tripitaka was filled with gratitude. Master and disciples found some rice and foodstuff in the palace with which they prepared a meal for themselves. After they had eaten their fill, they packed up and set out once more on the main road toward the West. Thus it was that *true scriptures must be by true people sought; restless minds and raging wills will come to naught*.

**At Beggar he pities the infants and summons the night gods; in the golden hall he knows the demon speaking on the way and virtue**

*1 thought will stir up a demonic crew! So bitter's training though what can you do?*

*Rely on washing to remove the dust; the body harness and refine you must.*

*Sweep clean all causations,<sup>1</sup> to stillness return; stamp out every fiend without concern.*

*Of shackle and snare 1 will surely leap free and rise when work is done, to Great Canopy.<sup>2</sup>*

The Great Sage Sun having exerted every effort, succeeded in eliciting the assistance of Siddhartha to subdue the fiends. When the ordeal finally ended, Tripitaka and his disciples left the Lion-Camel Kingdom and journeyed westward. After several months, it was again the time of winter. See *the peak's jade-like plums half-blooming, the pond's water slowly icing. The red leaves have all dropped away and pines turn more verdant and happy. The pale clouds are about to snow; dried grass on the mountain lies low. What frigid scene now fills the eyes as bone-piercing chill multiplies!* Braving the cold and plunging through the chill, resting in the rain and feeding on the wind, master and disciples proceeded until they saw another city. “Wukong,” asked Tripitaka, “what sort of a place’s that over there?”

“When you get there,” replied Pilgrim, “you’ll know. If it’s a kingdom of the West, we’ll have to have our rescript certified. If it’s merely a district, county, or prefecture seat, we’ll just pass through.”

Hardly had master and disciples finished speaking than they arrived at the foot of the city gate. Tripitaka dismounted, and the four of them entered the outer wall of the city where almost immediately they found an old soldier huddled against the wind and sleeping beneath a wall exposed to sunlight. Pilgrim walked up to him and shook him gently, saying, “Officer.”

Waking with a start and blinking several times, the old soldier finally caught sight of Pilgrim. Immediately he went to his knees and respected, crying, “Holy Dad!”

“Stop making all this fuss!” said Pilgrim. “I’m no evil spirit! Why should you address me as Holy Dad?”

“Aren’t you Holy Dad Thunder-god?” asked the old soldier, still respecting.

“Certainly not!” said Pilgrim. “I’m a priest from the Land of the East on his way to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. I just arrived, and I came to ask you for the name of your region.” Only when he heard those words did the old soldier calm down; with a big yawn he scrambled up to stretch himself and say, “Elder, Elder, pardon me! This place was originally the Beggar Kingdom but now the name has been changed to the Young Masters’ City.”

“Is there a king in the city?” asked Pilgrim.

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” replied the old soldier. Pilgrim turned back to say to the Tang Monk, “Master, this place originally was called the Beggar Kingdom but it has been changed now to the Young Masters’ City. I don’t know why they changed the name.”

“If it was Beggar,” said a perplexed Tang Monk, “why then should it be called Young Masters?” 8 Rules said, “It must be that the Beggar king had died. The one newly occupying the throne is a young master, and that’s why it’s called the Young Masters’ city.”

“Nonsense! Nonsense!” said the Tang Monk. “Let’s go inside the city first. We may make further inquiry on the streets.”

“Exactly,” said Sand-monk. “That old soldier’s probably ignorant, or he may have been frightened into babbling by Big Brother. Let’s go into the city to make inquiry.”

They walked through three levels of city gates before they reached the big thoroughfares. As they paused to look around, they found that the people here all seemed to be good-looking and handsomely dressed. What they came upon were juice-shops and poems full of *raucous din*. *Tall colours adorned a teahouse or inn. Business was good at every gate and door; abundant wealth packed both mart and store. People, like ants, traded brocade and gold; for fame and for profit they bought and sold. What solemn manners! Such prosperous scene of calm seas and rivers – a year serene!* Toting the

luggage and leading the horse, master and disciples walked for a long time on the main boulevards where the sight of prosperity seemed endless. Then they began to notice that in front of each household was a geese coop. "O Disciples!" said Tripitaka. "All the people here put a geese coop in front of their house. Why's that?"

On hearing this, 8 Rules looked left, right, and he saw that indeed there were these geese coops lined with silk curtains of 5 colours. "Master," said Idiot with a giggle, "this must be an auspicious day for marriage or for meeting friends. The people must all be performing some rituals."

"Rubbish!" snapped Pilgrim. "How could every household be performing a ritual? There must be a reason for this. Let me go and take a look."

"You'd better not go," said Tripitaka, tugging at him. "Your hideous features will offend people."

"I'll go in transformation then," replied Pilgrim. Dear Great Sage! Making the magic sign, he recited a spell and changed with one shake of his body into a little bee. Wings outstretched, he flew up to one of the coops and crawled inside the curtains. There he discovered a little child sitting in the middle. When he went to another coop, he found another child also. In fact, he discovered the same thing in front of eight or nine households: they were all little boys, and there were no girls at all. Some of them were playing in the coops; others merely sat and cried; still others were eating fruit or sleeping. After seeing that, Pilgrim changed back into his original form to report to the Tang Monk: "There're little boys in the coops; the older ones cannot be more than seven years old and some of the younger ones are barely five I don't know why they're in there." His words made Tripitaka more perplexed than ever. A turn on the street brought them all at once up to the gate of an official mansion, the Golden Pavilion Postal Station. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, highly pleased, "let's go inside this postal station. We can ask them about the place, feed our horse, and request lodging for the night."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said Sand-monk. "Let's get inside quickly!"

As the 4 of them entered amiably, the officers on duty at once announced their arrival to the station master who ushered them inside. After they had exchanged greetings and taken their seats, the station master asked, "Elder, where did you come from?"

"Your humble cleric's," replied Tripitaka, "been sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. Having arrived in your noble region, we'd like to have our travel rescript certified and to beg you to grant us one night's lodging in your lofty mansion."

The station master immediately requested tea and asked those on duty to prepare the tokens of hospitality. Having thanked him, Tripitaka asked again, "Is it possible for me to enter the court today and have an audience with the throne and get my rescript certified?"

"You can't do it tonight," said the station master. "Wait until early court tomorrow. Please spend the night and rest here in our humble dwelling." In a little while, when the preparation had been finished, the station master invited the four pilgrims to partake of a vegetarian meal. His subordinates were ordered to sweep clean the guest room for the pilgrims to rest. After thanking him repeatedly, Tripitaka sat down and said to the station master, "There is something that this humble cleric must ask you to explain. How do the people of your noble region rear young children?"

The station master said, "As there are no two suns in Heaven, so there are no two rational principles on Earth. The rearing of children begins with the sperm of the dad and the blood of the mum. After the tenth month of conception, the child will be born in due time; and after birth, the child will be fed with milk for at least three years, until the bodily features are fully formed. You think we don't know about this?"

"According to what you've just told me," replied Tripitaka, "the people here are no different from those of my humble nation. But when I entered the city just now, I saw that there was placed in front of each household a geese coop, inside of which was placed a little boy. I don't understand this, and that's why I dare request an explanation."

"Elder, don't mind that!" said the station master, at once lowering his voice and whispering into Tripitaka's ear. "Don't ask about that, and don't be concerned with that! Don't speak of it, even! Please rest now, and you can be on your way tomorrow."

On hearing this however, the elder tugged at the station master and persisted in his request for an explanation. As he shook his head and wagged his finger, all the station master could mutter was, "Be careful with what you say!" Refusing to let go, Tripitaka insisted that he be told the reason. The station master had little choice but to send away all his official attendants, after which he said quietly, alone, by the light of the lamps, "The matter of the geese coops that you mentioned just now happens to be instigated by the unruliness of our lord. Why do you persist in asking about it?"

"What do you mean by unruliness?" asked Tripitaka. "You must help me understand before I can rest."

"This country," said the station master, "used to be called the Beggar Kingdom but recent folk poems' have changed the name to the Young Masters' City. Three years ago, an old man disguised as a Daoist arrived with a young girl, barely sixteen and with a face as beautiful as Guanyin's. He presented her as a tribute to our Majesty who became so infatuated with her that he gave her the title of Queen Beauty. In recent times he would not even look at any of the royal consorts dwelling in the six chambers and three palaces. Night and day he cares only to indulge in amorous dalliance with this one girl until he is reduced to a physical wreck. Constantly fatigued, emaciated, and unable to eat or drink, he has not long to live. The royal hospital has tried all its best prescriptions but no cure has been found. However, that Daoist who has been appointed the royal dad-in-law, claims to possess a secret formula from beyond the ocean which can lengthen our lord's life. Some time ago he went in fact to the Ten Islets and the Three Isles to gather herbs. After his return and the preparation of all the medications, he still requires the terrible medical supplement<sup>4</sup> of one thousand one hundred and eleven hearts of young boys. When the medicine is taken with soup made from boiling these boys' hearts, the king, so the Daoist claims, will live to a millennium without aging. Those little boys you saw in the geese coops are the selected ones who are being fed and nurtured before they are slaughtered. Fearing the law of the king, the parents dare not even weep. They can only express their outrage by nicknaming this place the Young Masters' City. When you go to court tomorrow, please confine your business to certifying your travel rescript. You mustn't mention this matter at all." He ended his speech and immediately withdrew. Elder was so horrified by what he heard that his bones weakened and his tendons turned numb. Unable to restrain the tears rolling down his cheeks, he blurted out: "Ah, befuddled king! So you grew ill because of your incontinence and debauchery. But how'd you take the lives of so many innocent boys? O misery! O misery! This pain kills me!" For this, a testimonial poem says:

*1 foolish tyrant who misses the truth's harmed himself with the pleasure he craves.  
He seeks long life by taking lives of boys; kills the plebs to lighten Heaven's scourge.  
Steadfast in compassion the monk remains; unheard-of horror the master reveals.  
As he sighs and sheds tears in the lamplight, demigod's disciple's overcome by pain.*

Drawing near to Tripitaka, 8 Rules said, "Master, what's the matter with you? 'You're always picking up someone's coffin and crying over it in your own house!' Don't be so sad! Remember the adage: *the ruler wants the subject to die and the subject who doesn't is disloyal; the dad wants the son to perish and the son who doesn't is un-filial*. He is hurting his own people but what does that have to do with you? Come, let's shed our robes and sleep. 'Let's not worry on behalf of the ancients!'"

Still shedding tears, Tripitaka said, "O disciple, you're so hard-hearted! Those of us who have left the family must accumulate merit by multiplying our virtuous acts; our very first obligation must be the practice of appropriate means. How could this befuddled king indulge in such a lawless act? I've never heard of such nonsense that eating people's hearts can lengthen one's life. How could I not grieve over something like this?"

"Please do not grieve just yet, Master," said Sand-monk. "Wait till tomorrow when we've our rescript certified. We can boldly discuss the matter with the king and if he doesn't listen to us, we can also ascertain what kind of person this royal dad-in-law is. Perhaps it is a monster-spirit, desirous of devouring human hearts that's devised such a plan. That may well be the case."

"Awakened to Purity is perfectly right," said Pilgrim. "Master, you'd sleep now. Let old monkey enter court with you tomorrow and scrutinize the royal dad-in-law. If he is a man, he may have embarked on the path of heterodoxy, being ignorant of the proper Way and thinking that only herbs and medicines will achieve realised mortality. Let old monkey disclose to him the essential themes of cultivation by means of one's natural endowments and enlighten him into embracing the truth. If he's a monster or a fiend, I'll arrest him for the king to see, so that he may learn continence and find out how to nourish his own body. I most certainly will not allow the king to take the lives of those boys."

When Tripitaka heard these words, he quickly saluted to Pilgrim and said, "O disciple, what you've proposed is most marvellous! Most marvellous! When you see that befuddled king however, you'd not ask about this matter right away. For I fear that the befuddled king without looking properly into the matter, would immediately find us guilty of listening to false rumours. What would we do then?"

"Old monkey has his own magic power," said Pilgrim, smiling. "First, I'll remove these boys in the geese coops from the city, so that tomorrow he will have no one from whom he can take out the hearts. The officials of the land will undoubtedly report to the throne, and that befuddled king will surely respond by discussing the matter with the royal dad-in-law or by asking for more boys to be selected. At that point we'll memorialise to him also. Then he will not blame us."

Highly pleased, Tripitaka said again, "How can you make those boys leave the city? If you can, the virtue of my worthy disciple is great as Heaven! You'd do this quickly. If you delay, you may be too late." Arousing his spiritual powers, Pilgrim rose at once and gave this instruction to 8 Rules and Sand-monk: "Sit here with Master and let me act. When you see a gust of cold wind blowing, you'll know that the boys are leaving the city." Whereupon the three of them, Tripitaka and his two disciples, began reciting: "We submit to the Life-Saving God of Medicine!<sup>5</sup> We submit to the Life-Saving God of Medicine!"

Once Great Sage had gone out the door, he rose with a whistle to mid-air where he made the magic sign and recited the magic words: "Let *Ohm* purify the religion realm!" With this he summoned a god of the city, the local spirit, a god of the soil, and various mortal officials together with the Guardians of 5 Quarters, the 4 Sentinels, the 6 Gods of Darkness and 6 Gods of Light, and the Guardians of Monasteries who arrived in the air to salute him saying, "Great Sage, for what urgent business have you summoned us in the thick of night?"

"Because we came upon an unruly king in the Beggar kingdom," replied Pilgrim, "who's listened to some monstrous pervert's tale that the hearts of little boys, when taken as a medical supplement would grant him longevity. My master's so disturbed that he's resolved to save lives and exterminate the fiend. That's why old monkey has asked each one of you to come here; I want you to use your magic powers and move all these boys including the geese coops out of the city. Take them into a mountain valley or deep into a forest and supply them with fruit to eat so that they'll not starve. You must also provide them with secret protection and prevent them from crying or being frightened. When I've eliminated the perversity and restored the king to the proper rule of his state, you may then return the boys just as we're about to leave." When the various gods heard this command, each of them exercised his magic power as they dropped down from the clouds. The city immediately was filled with churning cold wind and spreading fog. *The cold wind darkened a sky full of stars; the fog spreading bedimmed the radiant moon. At the very first they drifted and floated down; but thereafter they roared and rumbled through – drifting and floating down, they sought to save the boys from every house; roaring and rumbling through, they found the geese coops to help flesh and blood. People stayed home for the invading chill and piercing cold turned garments iron-hard. Parents fretted in vain and kinfolk were aggrieved as cold wind churned the earth to remove the boys in coops. This night they may be lonely; by dawn they will all be pleased.* Also a poem as a testimonial says:

*Since mercy ever abounds in God's gate, goodness perfected is what's called the Great.<sup>6</sup>  
All saints and sages must virtue increase; the sum of Triratna<sup>7</sup> and 5 laws<sup>8</sup> is peace.  
Hadn't a king at Beggar state gone bad, 1000 youngsters' fate would still be sad.  
When Pilgrim saves them merit above salvation he'll make for his master's sake.*

It was about the hour of the third watch during that night when the various deities transported those geese coops to be hidden at another place. Lowering his auspicious luminosity, Pilgrim went to the courtyard of the posthouse where he could hear his 3 companions still reciting, "We submit to the Life-Saving God of Medicine!"

In great delight, he drew near and called out, "Master, I've returned! What do you think of the cold wind?"

"That's some cold wind!" replied 8 Rules.

"But what about rescuing the boys?" asked Tripitaka.

"They've already been taken out one by one," replied Pilgrim, "and will be escorted back to the city by the time we're ready to leave."

Tripitaka thanked him repeatedly before retiring. By dawn, Tripitaka began to dress the moment he awoke, saying, "Wukong, I want to attend the morning court so that our travel rescript maybe certified."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "if you go by yourself, I fear that you may be unable to accomplish much. Let old monkey go with you to ascertain whether the kingdom is governed by rectitude or perversity."

"But you usually refuse to perform the proper ceremony when you greet a king," said Tripitaka, "and I fear he may be offended."

"I'll not show myself," said Pilgrim. "I'll follow you in secret and can protect you at the same time."

Highly pleased, Tripitaka instructed 8 Rules and Sand-monk to watch the luggage, the horse, and then departed. When the station master saw them off, he noticed that the attire of the elder was quite different from that of the day before: *wore a brocade cassock lined with strange treasures. A gold-tipped Vairocana hat topped his head. His hands held up a nine-ringed priestly staff; chest enclosed one wondrous, godly spark. The travel rescript he had on himself, packed in a silk purse placed inside the wrap. He walked like an Arhat come down to earth with a genuine, living God's blessing.* After greeting Tripitaka, the station master whispered in his ear and told him to mind his own business. As Tripitaka nodded and murmured his assent, the Great Sage stepped to one side of the door and recited a spell; with one shake of his body he changed into a mole cricket and flew up to light on top of Tripitaka's hat. The elder left the postal station and headed straight for the court. On arriving, he ran into the Custodian of the Yellow Gate to whom he saluted and said, "This humble priest's someone sent by the Great Tang of the Land of the East to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. It's proper for me to have my travel rescript certified after arriving in your noble region. I therefore wish to have an audience with the throne. I beg you to make this known for me."

Upon which, that Custodian of the Yellow Gate made his report. In delight, the king said, "A priest from a distant land must be most accomplished in the Way. Show him in quickly."

The Custodian thus summoned the elder to enter the court; after going through the ceremonial greetings beneath the steps, he was granted permission to take a seat in the royal hall. As he thanked the king and sat down, the elder noticed that the king had *emaciated features and a listless spirit. He raised his hands but could barely salute; his voice started and stopped when he spoke.* When the elder presented him with the rescript, the king stared at it with unseeing eyes for a long time before he was able to affix his treasure seal on the document and hand it back to the elder. The king was just about to question our elder further on the reason for seeking scriptures when the official attending the throne reported, “The royal dad-in-law’s arrived.”

At once supporting himself on a young palace eunuch, the king struggled down from the dragon couch in order to receive the visitor. Elder was so taken aback that he too leaped up and stood to one side. As he turned to look, he discovered an old Daoist swaggering up from the jade steps. The man Tripitaka saw *had on his head a cloud-patterned, priestly wrap of pale yellow damask, and he wore a crane-feathered gown of brown silk fretted with plum designs. A blue sash, braided with 3 silk and woollen cords wrapped his waist; feet trod cloud-patterned slippers woven of grass-linen and hemp. His hand held a 9-jointed staff of dried vine carved like a coiling dragon. Down his chest hung a silk purse embroidered with raised dragon-and-phoenix patterns. His jade-like face was shiny and smooth; a white beard flowed down his chin; pupils blazed golden flames; eyes were longer than his brows. Clouds moved with each step he took and fragrant mists encircled him. Hands folded, all officials beneath the steps shouted: “The royal dad-in-law’s entered court!”*

When that royal dad-in-law arrived at the front of the treasure hall, he did not even bother to pay homage to the king. His head held high, he walked boldly up the steps while the king saluted and said, “We’re delighted that the royal dad-in-law’s honoured us with his divine presence this morning.”

He was at once asked to be seated on the cushioned couch on the left. Taking a step forward, Tripitaka also bent low to greet him, saying, “Sir royal dad-in-law, this humble cleric salutes you.”

Sitting loftily on his couch, the royal dad-in-law did not return the greetings at all; instead, he turned to say to the king, “Where did this monk come from?”

“He happens to be someone sent by the Tang court in the Land of the East to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven,” replied the king. “He’s here to have his travel rescript certified.”

“The journey leading to the West’s,” said the royal dad-in-law with a laugh, “shrouded in darkness<sup>9</sup> What’s so good about that?”

Tripitaka said, “Since ancient times the West’s been the noble region of ultimate bliss. How’d it not be good?”

The king asked, “We’ve heard from the ancients too that monks are the disciples of God. We’d like to know in truth whether a monk is able to transcend death whether submission to God can bring a person longevity.”

On hearing this, Tripitaka quickly pressed his palms together in front of his chest to give his reply: “*For the person who’s a monk, all causal relations have been abolished and to him who understands reality, all things are but emptiness. He of great knowledge, both wide and comprehensive,* <sup>10</sup>*exists placidly in the realm of no birth; the true mysteries perceived in silence, he roams freely in peace and tranquillity. With no attachments in the Three Realms, all elementary principles are known; he’s insights into all causes since his six senses are purged. He who’d strengthen knowledge and consciousness must perforce know the mind; for a mind purified shines in solitary enlightenment and a mind preserved pierces all mental projections. The face of truth can be seen even in a previous life without want or excess; but shapes of delusion though formed, decline at last. Why seek them beyond bounds? Sedentary meditation’s the very source of concentration; almsgiving and charity are the foundation of austerity. He who’s great wisdom will appear foolish for he knows how not to act in every affair; he who’s good at planning won’t scheme for he needs must let go in every instant. Once the mind’s made immovable, all your actions are perfected. But if you dwell on picking the yin to nourish the yang, you speak but foolish words; to bait the eye with long life amounts to an empty promise. You must abandon all particles of defilement, regard all phenomena as emptiness. When you, plain and simple, reduce your desire, you’ll with ease an endless life acquire.*” <sup>11</sup>

When that royal dad-in-law heard these words, he smiled sarcastically and pointed his finger at the Tang Monk. “Ha! Ha! Ha!” he cried. “Your mouth’s, monk, full of balderdash! Those within the fold of Extinguishment all talk about the knowledge of reality. But you don’t even know how reality’s to be extinguished! Sedentary meditation – why, that’s nothing but the practice of blind cultivation! As the proverb says: Sit, sit, sit! Your bottom will split! Play with fire and you’ll land in the pit! You’ve no idea that I who seek mortality possess the hardest of bones, comprehend the Way, I’m most intelligent in spirit. I carry basket and gourd to visit friends in the mountain; I gather a hundred herbs to help people in the world. Divine flowers I pick to make a hat; fragrant orchids I pluck to form a mat. I recite to clapping of hands and rest on clouds after I exercise. Explaining the principles of Dao, I exalt the true teachings of Laozi; dispensing amulets and water, I rid the human world of monstrous miasmas. I rob Heaven and Earth of their energies and pluck from sun and moon their essences. Yin and yang activated, the elixir gels; fire and Water harmonised, the embryo’s formed. When the yin of Two Eights<sup>12</sup> recedes, it’s both dim and blurry; when the yang of Three Nines<sup>13</sup> expands, it’s both dark and obscure. In accord with the four seasons I gather herbs; by nine cylindrical turns my elixir’s perfected. Astride the blue phoenix, I ascend the purple mansion; mounting the white crane, I reach the capital of jade where I join all Heaven’s luminaries in zealous display of the wondrous Way. Could this be compared with the quiescence of your religion, the dark divinity of your tranquillity? The stinking corpse bequeathed by Extinguishment that can never leave the mortal dust? Of the Three Religions mine’s the highest mystery, Dao’s alone noble since the dawn of history!”<sup>14</sup>

On hearing this, the king was filled with delight while the officials of the entire court shouted, “Bravo! Indeed, Dao alone is noble since the dawn of history! Dao alone is noble since the dawn of history!” When the elder saw that everyone had praise for the Daoist, he was terribly embarrassed. The king, nevertheless, asked the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a vegetarian meal so that the priest from distant lands could eat before he departed again for the West.

Tripitaka gave thanks as he withdrew; he descended from the main hall and was just about to walk out when Pilgrim flew down from his hat and whispered in his ear: “Master, this royal dad-in-law is a perverse fiend, and the king is under his influence. You go back first to the postal station to wait for the meal. Let old monkey remain here to learn something more of him.” Tripitaka understood and left, and we’ll leave him for the moment.

Look at our Pilgrim! He soared up and alighted on one of the kingfisher screens in the Hall of Golden Chimes, when the Commander of Five Military Commissions stepped from the ranks to say, “My lord, there was a gust of cold wind last night which swept away without a trace, all the little boys lodged in the geese coops in front of the houses.”

When the king heard this memorial, he was both frightened and angered. “This means,” said he to the royal dad-in-law, “that Heaven wants to destroy us! We’ve been sick for months, and the imperial physician has been wholly ineffectual. It was fortunate that the royal dad-in-law has bestowed on us a divine prescription. We’re just waiting for the noon hour today to lift the knife and take out these boys’ hearts and use them as our medical supplement. How could they all be swept away by a gust of cold wind? What explanation could there be other than that Heaven wanted to destroy us?”

With a smile, the royal dad-in-law said, “Your Majesty, please do not worry. The fact that these boys have been swept away means quite the contrary; this is precisely a gift of long life that Heaven is sending to Your Majesty.”

“How could you say that,” asked the king, “when those boys in the coops have all been blown away?”

“When I entered court just now,” replied the royal dad-in-law, “I noticed an absolutely marvellous medical supplement, far surpassing those one thousand one hundred and eleven young boys’ hearts. Those hearts could only lengthen your life for about a millennium. But taken with the newfound supplement, my divine medicine will lengthen your Majesty’s life for thousands and thousands of years.” Since the king however, did not understand at all what medical supplement the Daoist was referring to, he pressed for an explanation. Then the royal dad-in-law said, “I’ve noticed that the monk who has been sent by the Land of the East to seek scriptures is possessed of pure and orderly features. They reveal that he has in fact a true body which has practiced religion for at least ten disciples, and that he has been a monk since childhood. He is, in truth, someone who has never dissipated his original yang, someone ten thousand times better than all those little boys put together. If you can get his heart to make soup and take my divine medicine, you’ll certainly acquire the age of ten millennia.”

Believing completely what he had heard, the befuddled ruler said, “Why didn’t you tell us sooner? If it had that kind of efficacy, I’d have detained him just now and not let him go.”

“But that’s not difficult!” said the royal dad-in-law. “Just now the Court of Imperial Entertainments was told to prepare a vegetarian meal for him. He will undoubtedly eat first before leaving the city. Issue an edict right now for all the city gates to be closed. Call up the troops, have the Golden Pavilion Postal Station surrounded, and tell them to bring back the monk. First, ask for his heart politely. If he agrees, cut him up and take it out at once. You may promise him an imperial burial and a shrine erected in his honour, so that he may enjoy perpetual sacrifice. If he does not comply with your request, we’ll show him the ugly power of force. Tie him up at once, and then cut out his heart. Isn’t that easy?” The befuddled ruler indeed followed his suggestion; he gave the decree at once that the city gates should be shut. The imperial guards and their captains were sent to have the postal station surrounded.

When Pilgrim heard this, he spread his wings and darted back to the postal station and changed back to his true form to say to the Tang Monk, “Master, disaster! Disaster!” Tripitaka was just enjoying the imperial banquet with 8 Rules and Sand-monk. These sudden words so terrified him that the spirits of Three Cadavers left him and smoke poured out of his seven apertures. He fell to the ground at once, his body covered with sweat. All he could do was roll his eyeballs; he could not utter a word. Sand-monk hurried forward to take hold of him, crying, “Master, wake up! Master, wake up!”

“What disaster? What disaster?” asked 8 Rules. “Speak slowly, will you please! Must you frighten Master like that?”

“Since Master left the court,” replied Pilgrim, “old monkey stayed behind and ascertained that that royal dad-in-law was indeed a monster-spirit. Soon afterward, the Commander of Five Military Commissions reported that the cold wind had blown away the little boys. The king was frustrated but the Daoist told him to be happy instead, saying that it was actually Heaven’s gift of long life to him. He wanted to ask for Master’s heart to be the medical supplement, something he claimed would grant the king an age of ten millennia. Believing such a perverse suggestion, the befuddled ruler called up his troops to come and surround the postal station. Moreover, the Embroidered-uniform Guards have been sent here to ask for Master’s heart.”

“You’ve exercised marvellous compassion!” said 8 Rules with a laugh. “You’ve saved marvellous boys! You’ve called up marvellous cold wind! But this time you’ve also brought disaster on us!”

Trembling all over, Tripitaka scrambled up to tug at Pilgrim and plead with him, “O worthy disciple! How will we face this?”

“If you want to face this,” said Pilgrim, “the old must become the young.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Sand-monk. Pilgrim said, “If you want to preserve your life, the master will have to become the disciple, and the disciple will have to become the master.”

“If you can save my life,” said Tripitaka, “I’m willing to be your disciple and grand disciple.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “no need to hesitate any longer. 8 Rules, hurry and get me some mud.” Idiot immediately used his muckrake to rake up some dirt; not daring however, to go outside to fetch water, he hitched up his clothes instead and pissed on the ground. With the urine he managed to mix a lump of stinking mud that he handed to Pilgrim. Pilgrim, too, had little alternative but to flatten the mud and press it on his own face and, after a little while, succeeded in making an apelike mask. Asking the Tang Monk to stand up but without uttering another word, Pilgrim pasted the mask on his master’s face and recited a magic spell. He then blew his mortal breath onto the mask, crying, “Change!”

At once the elder took on the appearance of Pilgrim. He was told to take off his own garments and switch clothes with Pilgrim who made the magic sign and then recited another spell to change into the form of the Tang Monk. The 2 of them looked so alike their own true selves that even 8 Rules and Sand-monk could not distinguish them. As soon as they finished dressing, they heard the sounds of gongs and drums and saw a forest of scimitars and lances approaching. The captains of the imperial guards had arrived with three thousand troops to have the postal station surrounded. Then an Embroidered-uniform guard walked into the courtyard to ask, “Where is the elder from the Tang court in the Land of the East?”

Shaking and quaking, the station master went to his knees and said, pointing with his finger, “In one of those guest rooms down there.”

The guard walked to the guest room and said, “Elder Tang, my king invites you to the palace.”

While 8 Rules and Sand-monk stood on two sides to guard the false Pilgrim, the false Tang Monk came out the door and saluted saying, “Sir Embroidered-uniform, what does His Majesty have to say when he asks for this poor cleric?”

Rushing forward to grab him, the guard replied, “I’ll go with you into court. He must’ve some use for you.” Also so it is that *fiendish lies triumph over compassion; compassion’s met instead with violence.*

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### He meets Long Life, searching the cave for the fiend; the proper lord of the court sees the babies<sup>1</sup>

The Embroidered-uniform Guard yanked the spurious Tang Monk out of the postal station. At once the imperial guards had them surrounded before they all headed for the gate of the court. There they said to the Custodian of the Yellow Gate: “We’ve brought the Tang Monk here. Please report this for us.”

The custodian sent in the memorial hurriedly, and the befuddled king sent for the guest at once. While all the officials knelt down at the foot of the steps to salute the king, the spurious Tang Monk stood erect at the centre of the steps and shouted, “King Beggar, why did you ask this humble cleric to come?”

With a smile, the king said, “An illness has afflicted us for many days and no cure has been found. Fortunately, our royal dad-in-law has bestowed on us a prescription for which all the medicines have been prepared. All we need now is one particular supplement that we must seek from you. If we’re cured of our illness, we promise that we’ll build a shrine for the elder. You’ll enjoy sacrifices in all four seasons and perpetual incense fires of the state.”

“I’m a person who has left the family,” replied the spurious Tang Monk. “I came here with hardly any possessions on me. Would Your Majesty please ask the royal dad-in-law what sort of thing he wants of me for the medical supplement?”

“What we need,” said the befuddled king, “is the heart of the elder.”

The spurious Tang Monk said, “To tell you the truth, Your Majesty, I’ve quite a few hearts. Which colour or shape would you like?”

“Priest,” said the royal dad-in-law who was standing on one side, pointing with his finger, “we want your black heart.”

"In that case," said the spurious Tang Monk, "bring me the knife quickly, so that I may cut open my chest. If I've a black heart, I'll be pleased to present it to you." Delighted, the befuddled king thanked him and asked the attendant to the throne to hand the spurious monk a curved dagger. Taking the dagger, the monk untied his robe and stuck out his chest. As he rubbed his belly with his left hand, he plunged the dagger into himself with his right hand and with a loud ripping noise, tore open his own chest. A mass of hearts rolled out, so terrifying the onlookers that the civil officials paled in fright and the military officers turned numb. When he saw that, the royal dad-in-law said in the hall, "This is a monk of many hearts!"<sup>2</sup>

The spurious monk took those bloody hearts and manipulated them one by one for all to see: a red heart, a white heart, a yellow heart, an avaricious heart, a greedy heart, an envious heart, a petty heart, a competitive heart, an ambitious heart, a scornful heart, a murderous heart, a vicious heart, a fearful heart, a cautious heart, a perverse heart, a nameless obscure heart, and all kinds of wicked hearts. There was however, not one single black heart!

That befuddled king was so stupefied that he could hardly utter a word. Trembling all over, he could only mutter: "Take them away! Take them away!" Unable to hold back any longer, the spurious Tang Monk retrieved his magic. As he changed back into his original form, he said to the befuddled ruler, "Your Majesty, you've no perception whatever. In priests like us there are only good hearts but your dad-in-law is the one who has a black heart that can be used as the medical supplement.<sup>3</sup> If you don't believe me, let me take it out for you to see."

On hearing this, that royal dad-in-law opened his eyes wide to take a careful look, and he saw that the monk had quite changed his appearance. He no longer looked the same. Aha! *He recognised the Great Sage Sun of old who had great fame 5 centuries ago.* Swirling around, he mounted the clouds to rise up, only to be blocked by Pilgrim who bounded into the air with one somersault. "Where're you running to?" he bellowed. "Have a taste of my rod!"

The royal dad-in-law wielded his coiled-dragon staff to meet his adversary, and the two of them began a marvellous battle in mid-air. *The compliant rod, the coiled-dragon staff spread out the clouds to fill the airy void. The dad-in-law, a monster-spirit claimed for his fiendish daughter beauteous looks. The ruler's indulgence brought him disease; the monster wanted to slaughter young boys. The Great Sage came to show his magic might: he seized the fiend and saved the populace. The iron rod aimed fiercely at the head was met by a praiseworthy crooked staff. They fought till a sky full of mist darkened the city, each member of the households paled with fright; till souls of all officials left in flight, all palace girls and consorts changed their looks. They frightened Beggar's muddled ruler into frantic hiding and violent trembling, not knowing what to do. The rod rose like a tiger springing from the mount; the staff soared like a dragon breaking from the sea. Now this great disturbance at Beggar state would make distinct the righteous and perverse.* That monster-spirit fought bitterly with Pilgrim for some twenty rounds but the coiled-dragon staff was no match for the golden-hooped rod. After one half-hearted blow, the royal dad-in-law changed into a cold beam of light and sped into the inner chamber of the palace to pick up the fiendish queen whom he had presented as a tribute to the king. Both of them changed into cold beams of light and vanished at once. Dropping down from the clouds, Pilgrim went to the palace to say to the various officials, "You people have some royal dad-in-law!" The officials all began to salute to give thanks to the divine monk. "Stop saluting," said Pilgrim. "See where your befuddled lord's gone."

"When our lord saw the fight," one of the officials replied, "he was driven by fear into hiding. We've no idea which palace he has gone to."

"Search for him quickly!" commanded Pilgrim. "Don't let Queen Beauty abduct him." When they heard these words, the officials did not care whether they were permitted to enter the inner chambers or not. Together with Pilgrim they headed straight for the room of Queen Beauty but not a trace of the king could be found. Even Queen Beauty herself had disappeared. Meanwhile, the queen, the girl's consort of the Eastern Palace, the consort of the Western Palace, and the concubines of the Six Chambers all came to salute to give thanks to the Great Sage.

"Please rise, all of you," said the Great Sage. "It's not time for you to thank me yet. Let's go find your lord first." In a little while they saw four or five eunuchs support the befuddled ruler walking out from behind the Hall of Careful Conduct.<sup>4</sup> Saluting themselves on the ground, the various officials said in unison, "Our lord! Our lord! We're indebted to the divine monk who came to distinguish for us the true from the false. That royal dad-in-law is a perverse fiend. Even Queen Beauty has disappeared." When the king heard that, he immediately asked Pilgrim to leave the inner palace and go to the treasure hall with him. "Elder," he said, as he saluted to Pilgrim to thank him, "when you arrived this morning, you looked so handsome. How is it that you've changed your appearance now?"

"To tell you the truth, Your Majesty, the person who came here this morning was my master," replied Pilgrim, laughing. "He is Tripitaka, the bond-brother of the Tang court, and I'm Sun Wukong, his disciple. I've two other younger brothers – Bulseye Aware of Ability and Sand Awakened to Purity – who are now at the Golden Pavilion Postal Station. Because we knew that you believed in the monstrous suggestion and wanted my master's heart for medical supplement, old monkey changed into his appearance to come here especially to subdue the fiend." On hearing this, the king at once commanded one of the chief ministers of the Grand Secretariat to go to the postal station and fetch the master and his disciples.

By this time Tripitaka had learned that Pilgrim who had changed back to his original form, was trying to subdue the fiend in mid-air. The elder was frightened out of his wits, and it was fortunate that 8 Rules and Sand-monk were by his sides to support him. But he was still depressed by that lump of stinking mud that he had to wear on his face. It was then that he heard someone calling, "Master of the Law, we're the chief ministers of the Grand Secretariat sent by the king of the Beggar state. We're here especially to invite you to court so that you may receive our thanks."

"Master, don't be afraid! Don't be afraid!" said 8 Rules, grinning. "They are not inviting you so that they can demand your heart. I think Elder Brother must have won, and they want to thank you."

"That may well be the case," replied Tripitaka, "but how can I face people with this stinking face?"

"You've no choice," said 8 Rules. "Let's go see Elder Brother first, and we'll find a solution." That elder indeed had little choice but to follow 8 Rules and Sand-monk who toted the luggage and led the horse out into the courtyard. When the chief minister caught sight of them, he was aghast, crying, "Holy Dad! What a bunch of goblins and monsters!"

"Minister, please don't be offended by our ugliness," said Sand-monk. "We're born this way. But when my master sees my elder brother, he'll become handsome."

When the three of them arrived at court, they did not wait for the summons but walked right up to the hall. The moment Pilgrim saw them, he ran down the steps and pulled the lump of mud from his master's face. Blowing his mortal breath on him, Pilgrim cried "Change!" and the Tang Monk at once assumed his original form, feeling more energetic and spirited than before. Meanwhile, the king himself descended the steps to meet them, addressing the Tang Monk as "Venerable God, Master of the Law." After master and disciples had tethered the horse, they all went up to the hall to exchange greetings.

"Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, "do you happen to know where that fiend came from? Let old monkey go there and seize him, so that any evil consequence will be eliminated." When all those palace ladies and concubines standing behind the kingfisher screens heard Pilgrim speaking of eliminating any evil consequence, they ignored the observance of proper etiquette between men and women and all walked out together to salute him saying, "We beg the divine monk, the venerable God, to exercise his mighty magic power. Please pull the grass up by the root and exterminate him thoroughly. For this profound act of kindness we'll repay you handsomely."

Returning their salutes hurriedly, Pilgrim pressed the king for the address of the Daoist. Somewhat abashed, the king spoke up: "When he arrived three years ago, we did question him, and he told us that he lived not too far from here, in Pure Florescence Village on the Willow Slope south of the city some seventy miles away. Though the royal dad-in-law was aged, he had no son, only a daughter by his second wife. Having just turned sixteen, she had not been betrothed to anyone, and he was willing to present her as a tribute to us. Since we loved the girl, we accepted her and took her in as a palace consort. Then we're afflicted by illness that the repeated efforts of the imperial physician could not alleviate. The royal dad-in-law told us that he had a divine formula that required the hearts of young boys to make soup for supplement. It was our folly to have believed in his words so readily. The boys were selected, and the noon hour today in fact was to be the appointed time for their hearts to be gouged out. Little did we anticipate that the divine monk would descend to our realm. When we discovered that the boys in the coops had disappeared, he convinced us that the divine monk who had practiced the cultivation of realised mortality for ten disciples, had never permitted his original yang to dissipate. If we'd acquire his heart, he said, it would be ten thousand times better than the hearts of the little boys. That was the reason for our misguided affront offered to you. We didn't know that the divine monk would recognise the fiendish demon. We beseech you to exercise your vast magic power and eliminate all evil consequences, for which we'll thank you with the wealth of a nation."

"To tell you the honest truth," said Pilgrim smiling, "those boys in the coops were hidden by me on the merciful request of my master. Don't speak of repaying us with any wealth or riches. When I've caught the fiend, that'll be my merit." He then called out: "Eight Rules, follow me quickly!"

"I'm glad to obey you, Elder Brother," replied 8 Rules, "but my stomach's so empty I can hardly exert myself."

The king immediately asked the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a vegetarian meal that soon arrived. After he had eaten his fill, 8 Rules roused himself and mounted the clouds to rise into the air with Pilgrim. The king, the queens, and all those civil and military officials were so taken aback that they fell to their knees and respected to the sky, all crying, "True mortals, true Gods have descended to earth!" The Great Sage took 8 Rules straight to a place some seventy miles south of the city where they stopped the wind and cloud to look for the fiend's dwelling. All they could see however, was a clear brook flanked by thousands of willows on both sides but the Pure Florescence Village was nowhere to be found. Truly *acres of wild paddies, an endless sight; banks of misty willows but no human trace.* After the Great Sage Sun had searched in vain for the fiend, he made the magic sign and recited the mortal word *Ohm* with which he at once summoned into his presence the local spirit. Trembling all over, the deity drew near to kneel down, saying, "Great Sage, the local spirit of Willow Slope respects to you."

"Don't be frightened," said Pilgrim, "for I'm not going to beat you. I've a question for you instead. This Pure Florescence Village of Willow Slope where is it?"

"There is here a Pure Florescence Cave," replied the local spirit, "but no Pure Florescence Village. This humble deity now perceives that the Great Sage perhaps has come here from the Beggar Kingdom?"

"Yes, yes!" said Pilgrim. "The Beggar king had been duped by a monster-spirit but old monkey recognised the fiend when I reached the city. When that fiend was defeated by me in battle, he changed into a cold beam of light and vanished. I asked the Beggar king who told us that he did inquire after the fiend's residence three years ago when he presented a beautiful girl as tribute. The fiend claimed then that he used to live in the Pure Florescence Village on Willow Slope, some seventy miles south of the city. Just now I searched my way here and all I saw was the slope. Since I didn't find any village, I thought I'd ask you."

"May the Great Sage pardon me!" said the local spirit, respecting. "Since the Beggar king's after all also the lord of this land, it's the proper duty of this humble deity to take note of his plight. But the monster-spirit's vast magic powers; once I betray his secret, he'll come and oppress me. That's why he's not been brought to justice. Now that the Great Sage has arrived, all you need do is to go up to a willow tree with nine branches at the south bank of the brook. Circle around the trunk three times from left to right and then three more times from right to left. Lean on the trunk with both hands and call three times: *Open the door.* The Pure Florescence Cave will appear."

On hearing this, the Great Sage dismissed the local spirit before leaping over the brook with 8 Rules to continue their search. Soon they found the tree that had indeed nine stems forking out from a single trunk. Pilgrim gave this instruction to 8 Rules: "Stand still at a distance and let me call the door open. When I find the fiend and chase him out here, you may back me up."

8 Rules agreed and stood about a quarter mile away. Following the words of the local spirit, Great Sage circled the trunk three times from left to right and 3 times right to left; leaning with both hands on the tree, he cried, "Open the door! Open the door! Open the door!"

Instantly 2 leaves of a door opened with a loud creak while the tree vanished entirely from sight. The inside was lit up by bright, luminous mists but again there was no hint of any human inhabitant. Rousing his magic powers, Pilgrim dashed into the cave, and he discovered a nice place indeed: *mist and smoke luminous; oblique rays of the sun and moon; white clouds that often leave the cave; green moss that densely coats the yard. A path full of strange blossoms vying for glamour; a step full of rare grasses most luxuriant. Warm, temperate air makes perpetual spring. The place seems like Lang-Yuan; it's no worse than Peng and Ying.* Long creepers spread over smooth benches; tousled vines dangle from a flat bridge. Bees, red stamens in their mouths, come to the cave; butterflies, playing with orchids, pass a rock screen. With big strides, Pilgrim dashed forward to take a careful look, and he saw four big words etched on the rock screen: Pure Florescence Mortal Residence. Unable to restrain himself, he leaped around the screen to look further, and there he saw the old fiend hugging a beautiful girl to his bosom. Both panting hard, they were in the midst of discussing the affairs of the Beggar Kingdom. "What a marvellous opportunity!" they said together. "Something we've been planning for three years and it'd have been completed today but it's ruined by that ape-head now!"

Darting up to them, Pilgrim whipped out his rod and cried, "You bunch of hairy lumps! What marvellous opportunity? Have a taste of my rod!"

Abandoning his beauty, the old fiend picked up his coiled-dragon staff hurriedly to meet him. The two of them began another fierce battle in front of the cave that was quite different from the one before. The upraised rod beamed golden light; the wielded staff belched viciousness. The fiend said, "You fool! How dare you barge inside my door?"

Pilgrim said, "I intend to subdue a fiend!"

The fiend said, "My tie to the king's not your concern. For what reason must you come oppress me?"

Pilgrim said, "The priest's vocation is on mercy based. We can't bear seeing young boys put to death."

Their words went back and forth, each full of hate. The staff met the rod, they aimed at the heart. They snapped strange flowers, watching for their lives; kicked up lichens as they slipped and slid. They fought till the cave's bright mists had lost their glow, the ledge's fine blossoms all collapsed. The big-bangs grounded the birds in fear; their shouting scared the beauty into flight. Only the old fiend and the Monkey King remained as violent gusts of wind howled through the earth. They fought on and on till they left the cave when Aware of Ability aroused his moronic might. 8 Rules was standing outside; when he heard them brawling inside, he became so excited that he could hardly contain himself. Whipping out his muckrake, he knocked down the willow tree with 9 branches with 1 terrific blow. As he raked the fallen trunk some more, fresh blood sprouted from the root and it emitted a sort of moaning sound. "This tree's become a spirit!" said 8 Rules. "This tree's become a spirit!"

He lifted his rake and was about to bring it down again when he saw Pilgrim emerging with the fiend. Without a word Idiot rushed forward and attacked with the rake. The old fiend was already finding it difficult to withstand Pilgrim; the sight of 8 Rules' rake therefore completely unnerved him. Turning to flee, he shook his body once and changed into a cold beam of light to head for the east. Unwilling

to let up at all, the 2 of them instantly gave chase. As they shouted to close in for the kill, they suddenly heard the calls of phoenix and crane and saw the glow of auspicious luminosity. Then they caught sight of the Aged Star of South Pole who had held down the cold beam of light. “Slow down, Great Sage,” he cried, “and stop chasing Heavenly Reeds. This old Daoist salutes you!”

“Brother Aged Star,” said Pilgrim, returning his greeting, “where’ve you come from?”

With a chuckle, 8 Rules said, “You blubbery codger! Since you’ve held down the cold beam of light, you must’ve caught the fiend.”

“He’s here, he’s here,” replied the Aged Star, smiling back at him. “I hope the two of you’ll spare his life.”

“That old fiend’s unrelated to you, old Brother,” said Pilgrim. “Why are you speaking up for him?”

“He happens to be my beast of burden,” replied the Aged Star with a smile, “and sneaked here to turn into a fiend.”

“If he’s a creature of yours,” said Pilgrim, “ask him to change back to his true form for us to see.”

When he heard this, the Aged Star released the cold beam of light and shouted, “Cursed beast! Show your true form quickly and we’ll pardon your mortal offence!” Rolling over, the fiend at once revealed himself as a white deer. “This cursed beast!” said the Aged Star as he picked up the staff. “He’s even managed to steal my staff!”

Salute on the ground, the white deer could not utter a word; all he did was respect and shed tears. *See his whole body striped like a token of jade, 2 up-thrust horns like 7 jagged blades. In hunger he would the herb garden seek and drink in thirst from the cloud-swollen creek. Aged, he had the power of flight attained, and over the years a face that changed he gained. When he at this time hears his master’s call, he will show his form and in submission fall.* After the Aged Star had thanked Pilgrim, he mounted the deer to leave, only to be grabbed by Pilgrim. “Old Brother,” he said, “please don’t leave yet. There are two unfinished matters.”

“What sort of unfinished matters?” asked the Aged Star.

Pilgrim said, “We’ve yet to catch the beautiful girl who must be some kind of fiendish creature and must return together to report to that befuddled ruler of the Beggar kingdom.”

“If you put it that way,” said the Aged Star, “I’ll be patient and wait a while. You and Heavenly Reeds go inside the cave and capture the beautiful girl. Then we can go together to let the king see these creatures in their true forms.”

“Just wait a moment, old Brother,” said Pilgrim, “we’ll be back soon.”

Arousing his spirit, 8 Rules followed Pilgrim into the Pure Florescence Divine Residence, both shouting, “Catch the monster-spirit! Catch the monster-spirit!”

The beautiful girl was still shaking so violently that she could hardly think of fleeing; when she heard the shouts, she dashed behind the rock screen but there was no back door for her to leave through.

“Where’re you going?” roared 8 Rules. “Watch my rake, you stinking, man-deceiving spirit!”

As the beautiful girl did not even have a weapon in her hand, she could only step aside and change at once into a cold beam of light to try to flee. She was however, met by the Great Sage who slammed his rod down hard on the beam. Immediately the fiend tumbled to the ground and revealed her true form: that of a white-faced vixen. Unable to hold back his hands, Idiot raised his rake and gave her head a terrific blow. *Alas! The smile that shakes a city and a state into a hairy, lumpish fox is made!* “Don’t mash her up!” cried Pilgrim. “Leave her body for that befuddled ruler to see.”

Not bothered by the filth, Idiot took her by the tail and yanked her body along to follow Pilgrim out the door. The Aged Star at that moment was just rubbing the deer’s head and scolding him. “Dear cursed beast!” he cried. “How could you turn your back on your master and come here to be a spirit? If I’d not arrived, you’d have been struck to death by the Great Sage Sun.”

“What are you saying, old Brother?” asked Pilgrim as he bounded out. “Just instructing the deer! Just instructing the deer!” replied the Aged Star. Throwing the dead vixen in front of the deer, 8 Rules asked, “Is this your daughter?” Nodding his head a few times, the deer stretched out his muzzle to sniff her and bleated several times, as if he could not bear parting with the vixen. He was given a whack on the head by the Aged Star who said, “Cursed beast! Isn’t it enough that you got your life? Why smell her?” He then untied the sash of his robe and fastened it around the neck of the deer to drag him along. “Great Sage,” he said, “I’ll go see the Beggar king with you.”

“Just a moment!” replied Pilgrim. “We might as well clean out the inside first, so that this place will not breed any more monstrosity in the years to come.” When he heard this, 8 Rules lifted up his rake and showered blows on the willow trunk. Pilgrim recited again the magic word *Ohm* to summon the local spirit, to whom he gave this instruction: “Find me some dried wood and make a good fire. I’m trying to rid this place of monstrous calamity, so that you may be spared from any further oppression.” Turning round, the local spirit mounted gusts of cold winds with his ghostly troops to gather some frost-receiving grass, autumn-green grass, smartweeds, mountain-bud grass, dried southernwood, dried dragon-bones, and dried rushes – all withered plants that had been parched for more than a year and that could feed a fire like oil or fat. “Eight Rules,” Pilgrim cried, “no need to take the tree. Just stuff these things into the cave and light the fire. We’ll destroy the place.” As soon as the fire started, it did indeed turn the Pure Florescence monster residence into a flaming pit.

He then dismissed the local spirit before returning to face the king in the royal hall, accompanied by the Aged Star leading the deer and 8 Rules dragging the dead vixen. Pilgrim said to the king, “Here’s your Queen Beauty! You want to dally with her some more?” The bladder of the king quivered and his heart shook, and then his queens and consorts were all frightened into saluting by the sight of the Aged Star leading the white deer. Pilgrim went forward to raise up the king, saying to him with a chuckle, “Don’t salute me. Here’s your dad-in-law. You’d salute him!”

Terribly embarrassed, the king could only murmur, “I thank the divine monk’s Heavenly grace for saving the boys of my nation.” He at once ordered the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a huge vegetarian banquet. The East Hall was opened wide so that the Old Man of South Pole, the Tang Monk, and his three disciples could be seated to receive proper thanks. After Tripitaka and Sand-monk saluted to greet the Aged Star, they both asked, “If the white deer belonged to the Venerable Aged Star, how could it get here to harm people?”

The Aged Star answered, smiling, “Sometime ago the Supreme Ruler of the East<sup>7</sup> passed by my mountain and I asked him to stay for chess. Hardly we’d finished 1 game when this cursed beast ran away. When we’d not find him after the guest’s departure, I calculated by bending my fingers and realised that he’d come to this place. I came to search for him and ran into the Great Sage just in the process of demonstrating his power. If I’d come a little later, this beast would’ve been finished.” Hardly had he spoken when the report came that the banquet was ready. *Marvellous vegetarian banquet! The doorways decked with 5 colours; the seats full of strange fragrance; tables draped with glowing brocade damask; floors spread with luminous red carpets. From duck-shaped urns curled smoke of sandalwood incense; before the royal table came the fresh scent of vegetables. Look at the fruit crouque-en-bouche on the dish, the sweet pastries shaped like dragons or beasts. Mandarin-duck cakes and lion candies all looked so real; the parrot goblet and the egret handle all seemed lifelike. Every fruit item on display was rich; every maigre dish on the table was fine. Robustly round chestnuts, fresh lychees and peaches; dates and persimmons with the sweetest flavour; pine-seed and grape juices of the mellowest scent. Several kinds of honey-glazed food and a few steamed pastries. Viands deep-fried or sugar-coated made like blossoms or brocade. Huge buns piled high on golden trays; fragrant rice filled many silver bowls. Hot and spicy – the long rice noodles cooked in soup; potently scented – one bowl or dish after another. 1 could not describe all the mushrooms, yhe wood ears, the tender shoots, the Yellow Sperms; vegetables of 10 varieties and 100 rare delicacies. Presented back and forth without a pause were all kinds, all species of rich fare.* At the time, they took their seats according to rank: the Aged Star occupied the head table while the elder remained next to him. The king went to the table in front. Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk sat on one side. There were 3 other chief ministers on both sides to keep them company. As the Office of Poems was told to begin the serenade, the king held up his purple-mist cup to toast each person in turn though the Tang Monk was the only one who did not drink. 8 Rules then said to Pilgrim, “Elder Brother, I’ll leave the fruits to you but you must let us enjoy rice, soup, and the rest.”

Without regard for good or ill, that Idiot attacked the foodstuff madly and ate it up in no time at all. After the banquet was over, the Aged Star got up to leave but the king went forward to kneel to him to beg for a method that would eliminate illness and lengthen his years. With a smile the Aged Star said, “I was looking for my deer and brought along no elixir or herbs. I’d have liked to impart to you the formula for cultivation but your tendons have so deteriorated and spirit’s been so impaired that it’d be impossible for you to accomplish the reversion of the elixir.<sup>8</sup> In my sleeve here’re however, three fire dates that’re the presents of the Supreme Ruler of the East for my tea. I’ve not eaten them yet and I’d like to give them to you now.”

After the king had swallowed the dates, he felt as if a great weight had been lifted gradually from his body as his illness receded. In fact, the longevity those descendants of his later attained might be traced to this. When 8 Rules saw that the king had received such a gift, he cried out, “Old Age, if you’ve anymore fire dates, give me some, too.”

“I’ve brought no more along,” replied the Aged Star. “Another day I’ll send you a few pounds.”

He walked out of the East Hall, and having thanked his host once more, he ordered the white deer to stand up and leaped onto its back. They both rose immediately into the air and left treading on the clouds. The ruler, his consorts, and the populace of the city all saluted to the ground and burned incense. Then Tripitaka said, “Disciples, start packing so that we may take leave of the king.” The king however, begged them to stay and instruct him. “Your Majesty,” said Pilgrim, “from now on you must lessen your sensual pursuits and increase instead your unpublicized good deeds. In all affairs you’d allow your strength to compensate for your weakness, and you’ll find that this is quite sufficient to stave off sickness and lengthen your life. Such is the instruction I’ve for you.”

Thereafter the king also presented them with two trays of gold and silver pieces as travel money but the Tang Monk refused to accept even a penny. The king had no alternative but to send for his imperial cortege and asked the Tang Monk to be seated on the phoenix carriage in the dragon chariot. He and his consorts all put their hands on the carriage and pushed it out of the court. At the same time, all the main boulevards were lined with citizens who added pure water to their sacrificial vases and true incense in the urns to send the pilgrims out of the city. Just then a roar of the wind from mid-air brought down to both sides of the road one thousand, one hundred and eleven geese coops with some crying young boys inside. The local spirit, city god, god of the soil, mortal officials, the Guardians of 5 Quarters, the 4 Sentinels, the 6 Gods of Darkness, 6 Gods of Light, and the guardians of monasteries who gave secret protection to the children all announced in a loud voice: “Great Sage, you told us previously to take away these boys in the geese coops. Now that your merit’s been achieved and you’re about to leave, we’ve brought them back one by one.”

The king, the queens, and all the citizens saluted down as Pilgrim said to the air, “I thank you all for your help. Please return to your shrines and I’ll ask the people to offer you their thanksgiving sacrifice.”

Sighing and sighing, the gust of cold wind rose once more and then quickly subsided. When Pilgrim then asked the households of the city to come retrieve their children, the news was spread abroad at once and all the people came to identify and claim the boys in the coops. In great delight they were lifted out of the cages, hugged, and addressed as *darling* and *precious*. Jumping about and laughing, the people all shouted, “We must take hold of the Holy Dads of the Tang court and bring them back to our homes. We must thank them for this profound act of kindness!” And so the people went forward, young and old, male and female without the slightest fear of how ugly the pilgrims might look: they hauled Bullseye 8 Rules up bodily, they put Sand-monk on their shoulders, they supported the Great Sage Sun with their heads, and they lifted up Tripitaka with their hands. Leading the horse and toting the luggage, they surged back to the city; not even the king could restrain them. While one family gave a banquet, another prepared a feast; those who did not have time to take their turns made priestly caps and sandals, clerical robes and cloth stockings, and all manner of inner and outer garments to be presented as gifts. Indeed the pilgrims had to linger for nearly a month in that city before they could leave. Before their departure, the people also made portraits of them with their names inscribed on plaques below the pictures so that perpetual sacrifices and incense could be offered. Truly it was that *this secret good deed weighty as a mount has saved 1100 lives.*

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### The fair girl nursing the yang, seeks a mate; Mind Monkey guarding his master, knows a monster

We’re telling you about the Beggar king escorted the Tang Monk and his disciples out of the city along with his subjects; they journeyed for some 20 miles and still the king refused to turn back. At last Tripitaka insisted on leaving the imperial chariot and mounted the horse to take leave of the escorts who waited until the pilgrims were out of sight before returning to their own city. The 4 pilgrims travelled for some time until both winter and spring faded; there was no end to the sight of wildflowers and mountain trees, of lovely and luxuriant scenery. Then they saw in front of them a tall, rugged mountain. Growing alarmed, Tripitaka asked, “Disciples, there’s any road on that tall mountain ahead? We must be careful!”

“Your words, Master,” said Pilgrim with a laugh, “hardly sound like those of a seasoned traveller! They seem more like those of a prince or nobleman who sits in a well and stares at the sky. As the ancient proverb says, *a mountain doesn’t block a road for a road passes through a mountain.* Why ask about whether there is any road or not?”

“Perhaps the mountain does not block the road,” replied Tripitaka, “but I fear that such a treacherous region will breed some fiends or that monster-spirits will emerge from the depth of the mountain.”

“Relax! Relax!” said 8 Rules. “This place probably isn’t too far from the region of ultimate bliss and it’s bound to be peaceful and safe.”

As master and disciples were thus conversing, they soon reached the base of the mountain. Taking out his golden-hooped rod, Pilgrim went up a rocky ledge and called out: “Master, this is the way to go around the mountain. It’s quite walkable. Come quickly! Come quickly!”

The elder had little choice but to banish his worry and urge the horse forward. “Second Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “you tote the luggage for a while.”

8 Rules accordingly took over the pole while Sand-monk held on to the reins so that the old master could sit firmly on the carved saddle and follow Pilgrim on the main road as they headed for the mountain. What they saw on the mountain were *cloud and mist shrouding the summit and rushing torrent in the brook; fragrant flowers clogging the road; 10000 trees both thick and dense; blue plums and white pears; green willows and red peaches. The cuckoo weeps for spring’s about to leave and swallows murmur to end the seedtime rites. 1Rugged rocks; jade-top pines; a rough mountain path, bumpy and jagged; precipitous hanging cliffs with thickets of creepers and plants. 1000 peaks noble like halberd rows; through countless ravines a grand river flows.* As the old master looked leisurely at this mountain scenery, the sound of a bird reciting filled him again with longing for home. He pulled the horse to a stop and called out, “Disciples! *Since Heaven’s plaque<sup>2</sup> conveyed the royal decree, the rescript 1 took beneath brocade screens. At Lantern Feast, the fifteenth, I left the East from Emperor Tang parted as Heaven from Earth. Just when dragons, tigers met with wind and cloud, master and pupils fell to horses and men. On all twelve summits of Mount Wu I’ve walked. When can I face my lord and see my king?*”



"Master," said Pilgrim, "you're always so full of longing for home that you're hardly like someone who's left home. Just relax and keep moving! Stop worrying so much! As the ancients said: *If wealth in life you wish to see, deadly earnest your work must be.*"

Tripitaka said, "What you say is quite right, disciple but I wonder how much more there's of this road that leads to the Western Heaven!"

"Master," 8 Rules said, "it must be that our Siddhartha is unwilling to part with those three baskets of scriptures. Knowing that we want to acquire them, he must've moved. If not, why's it that we just can't reach our destination?"

"Stop that foolish talk!" said Sand-monk. "Just follow Big Brother. Exert yourself and endure it. There'll be a day when we all arrive at our destination."

As master and disciples chatted in this manner, they came upon a huge, dark pine forest. Becoming frightened, the Tang Monk called out once more, "Wukong, we've just passed through a rugged mountain path. Why's it that we must face this deep, dark pine forest? We must be on guard."

"What's there to be afraid of?" asked Pilgrim.

Tripitaka replied, "Stop talking like that! As the proverb says, *you don't believe the honesty of the honest; you guard against the unkindness of the kind.* You and I've gone through several pine forests but none was as deep and wide as this one. Just look at it! *Densely spread out east and west – in thick columns north and south – densely spread out east and west it pierces the clouds; in thick columns north and south it invades the sky. Lush thistles and thorns are growing on all sides; creepers and weeds wind up and down the trunks. The vines entwine the tendrils – the tendrils entwine the vines – the vines entwine the tendrils to impede the east-west traveller; the tendrils entwine the vines to block the north-south trader. In this forest one may spend six months not knowing the seasons or walk a few miles without seeing the stars. Look at those thousand kinds of scenery on the shady side and ten thousand bouquets in the sunny part. There're also the millennial locust tree, the mortal juniper, the cold-enduring pine, the mountain peach, the wild peony, the dry-land hibiscus – in layers and clumps they pile together so riotous that even gods can't portray them. You hear also a hundred birds: the parrot's squeal; the cuckoo's wail; the magpie darting through the branches; the crow feeding her parents; the oriole soaring and dancing; a hundred tongues making melody; a call of red partridges and the speech of purple swallows. The Mynah learns to speak like a human; even the grey thrush can read a Thread. You see a big creature<sup>3</sup> wagging its tail and a tiger grinding its teeth, too; an aged fox disguised as a lady, an old grey wolf growing through the woods. Even if the Deity-King Pagoda-Bearer comes here, he'll lose his wits though he can subdue a monster!*" Not daunted in the least however, Great Sage Sun used his iron rod to open up a wide path and led the Tang Monk deep into the forest. Footloose and carefree, they proceeded for half a day but they had yet to reach the road leading out of the forest. The Tang Monk called out: "Disciples, our journey to the West's taken us through countless mountains and forests, all rather treacherous. This particular spot, I'm glad to say is quite nice and the road seems safe enough. The strange flowers and rare plants of this forest are certainly pleasing to behold. I want to sit for a while here – rest the horse and relieve my hunger – if you can go somewhere to beg us a vegetarian meal."

"Please dismount, Master," said Pilgrim, "and I'll go beg the meal."

That elder indeed dismounted; as 8 Rules tethered the horse to a tree, Sand-monk put down his load of luggage and took out the alms-bowl to hand to Pilgrim. "Master," said Pilgrim, "you may feel quite safe sitting here. Don't be frightened. Old monkey will return shortly." While Tripitaka sat solemnly in the pine shade, 8 Rules and Sand-monk amused themselves by going off to search for flowers and fruits. Great Sage somersaulted into mid-air. As he paused in his cloudy luminosity to look back, he saw that the pine forest was veiled by hallowed clouds and auspicious mists. So moved was he by the sight that he unwittingly blurted out, "Marvellous! Marvellous!" He said that because he was giving praise to the Tang Monk and recalling to himself the fact that his master was verily the disciple of the Elder Gold Cicada, a good man who has practiced austerities for 10 disciples. That was why his head was surrounded by such an auspicious halo. "Consider old monkey," he thought to himself. "At the time when I brought great disturbance to the Celestial Palace five centuries ago, I toured with the clouds the four corners of the sea and roamed freely the edges of Heaven. I assembled various monster-spirits to call myself the Great Sage Equal to Heaven; taming the tiger and subduing the dragon, I even removed our names from the register of death. My head wore a triple-decker gold crown and my body a yellow gold cuirass; my hands held the golden-hooped rod and my feet were shod in cloud-treading shoes. Some forty-seven thousand fiends under my command all addressed me as Venerable Dad Great Sage and that's some life I led. Now that I'm delivered from my Heaven-sent calamity, I must humble myself and serve this man as his disciple. But if my master's head's the protection of such hallowed clouds and auspicious mists, I suppose he'll end up with something good once he returns to the Land of the East and old monkey undoubtedly will also attain the right fruit."

As he thought to himself in this manner and gave praise to his master, he caught sight of a mass of black fumes boiling up from south of the forest. Greatly startled, Pilgrim said, "There must be something perverse in those black fumes! Our Eight Rules and Sand-monk can't release black fumes like that..."

In mid-air Great Sage at once tried to determine where those black fumes came from. Tripitaka was sitting in the forest with mind enlightened by the vision of a god-nature in all things. As he recited the *Great Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom and Compassion Thread* with utmost concentration, he suddenly heard a faint cry, "Save me! Save me!"

"My goodness! My goodness!" said Tripitaka, highly astonished. "Who'd be crying out like that deep in the forest? It must be someone scared by tigers or wolves. Let me take a look." Rising and striding forward, the elder went by the millennial cedars and the mortal pines; he climbed over creepers and vines to take a clear look. Tied to the trunk of a huge tree was a girl: the upper half of her body was bound by vines while the lower half of her body was buried in the ground. Stopping before her, the elder asked, "Nun, for what reason are you bound here?" *Alas!* She was clearly a monster but the elder, being of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, could not recognise her. When the fiend heard the question, she released a torrent of tears. *Look at her! As tears dripped from her peach-like cheeks, she had features that would sink fishes and drop wild geese; as grief flashed from her star-like eyes, she had looks that would daunt the moon and shame the flowers.* In truth not daring to approach her, our elder asked again, "Nun, what possible crime could you've committed? Speak up so that this humble cleric may rescue you."

With clever, deceptive words, false, and specious sentiments, the monster-spirit replied hurriedly, "Master, my home's located in the Bimbāna Kingdom<sup>4</sup> some two hundred miles from here. My parents still living and exceedingly devoted to virtue, have in all their lives been kind to friends and peaceable toward relatives. As this is the time of Clear Brightness, they invited various kinfolk and the young and old of our family to sweep clean our ancestral graves and offer sacrifices to the dead. A whole row of carriages and horses went out into the desolate wilds. We'd just set up the sacrifices and finished burning paper money and horses when the sound of gongs and drums brought out a band of strong men wielding knives, waving staffs, and screaming to kill as they fell on us. We're scared out of our wits. My parents and my relatives managed to escape on horseback or in the carriages. Being so young and unable to run, I fell in terror to the ground and was abducted by these brigands. The Big Great King wanted me to be his mistress; the Second Great King desired me for his wife; the Third and the Fourth, too, admired my beauty. A heated quarrel thus began among some seventy or eighty of them, and when they could not resolve their anger, they had me tied up in the forest before they scattered. I've been here like this for five whole days and nights, and I expect my life will expire any moment. I don't know which generation of my ancestors accumulated sufficient merit to acquire for me the good fortune this day of meeting the venerable master at this place. I beseech you in your great mercy to save my life. I'll never forget your kindness, even when I reach the Nine Springs of Hades!"

When she finished speaking, her tears fell like rain. Always a merciful person, Tripitaka could not refrain from shedding tears himself. In a choking voice, he called out, "Disciples!"

Our 8 Rules and Sand-monk were just searching for flowers and fruits in the forest when they suddenly heard the melancholy cry of their master. "Sand-monk," said Idiot, "Master must've recognised one of his relatives here."

"You're drivelling, second elder brother!" said Sand-monk, laughing. "We've not met one good man after walking all this time. Where'd this relative come from?"

"If it weren't a relative," replied 8 Rules, "you think Master would be weeping with someone else? Let's you and I go take a look."

Sand-monk agreed to go back to the original spot with him. As they drew near, leading the horse and toting the luggage, they said, "Master, what's up?"

Pointing to the tree, the Tang Monk said, "Eight Rules, untie that nun over there so that we may save her life."

Without regard for good or ill, Idiot immediately proceeded to do so. The Great Sage in mid-air saw that the black fumes were growing thicker all the time until they had the auspicious luminosity completely covered. "That's bad! That's bad!" he exclaimed. "When the black fumes have covered the auspicious luminosity, it may mean that some monstrous perversity's harmed master. Begging for vegetarian food's a small matter now. I'd better go see my master first."

Reversing the direction of his cloud, he dropped down into the forest where he found 8 Rules busily trying to untie the ropes. Pilgrim went forward, grabbed one of his ears, and flung him with a thud to the ground. As he raised his head to look and scramble up, Idiot said, "Master told me to rescue this person. Why did you've to strong-arm and give me this tumble?"

"Brother, don't untie her," said Pilgrim with a laugh. "She's a monster-spirit who's using some jugglery to deceive us."

"You brazen ape!" snapped Tripitaka. "You're babbling again! How'd you tell that this girl is a fiend?"

"Master, you may have no idea about this," replied Pilgrim, "but it's the kind of business old monkey's done before. This is the way monster-spirits try to get human flesh to eat. How'd you know about that?"

Pouting with his horn stuck out, 8 Rules said, "Master, don't believe the lies of this Ban-Horse-Plague. This girl belongs to a family here whereas we came from the distant Land of the East. We're no acquaintances or kinfolk of hers. How could we say that she is a monster-spirit? He wants us to abandon her and go on our way so that he can use his magic and somersault back here to have a nice time with her. He wants to sneak in through the back door!"

"Coolie, don't you dare mouth such nonsense!" snapped Pilgrim. "During this journey to the West, since when has old monkey ever been slothful or unruly? I'm no miserable bum like you who loves sex more than life, and who will sell out his friends for a price. Remember how dumb you're when you're deceived by that household's offer to take you in as a son-in-law and ended up being tied to a tree?"

"All right! All right!" said Tripitaka. "Eight Rules, your elder brother has always been quite right in his perception. If he puts it that way, let's not mind her. Let's leave."

"Marvellous!" said Pilgrim, highly pleased. "Master will be able to preserve his life. Please mount up. After we get out of the pine forest, I'll go to some household to beg you a vegetarian meal."

The four of them indeed abandoned the fiend and proceeded. Still bound to the tree, the fiend said to herself through clenched teeth, "I've heard people say for several years that Sun Wukong's vast magic powers. What I can see of him today certainly confirms the rumour. Since that Tang Monk has begun practicing austerities in his youth, he has never allowed his original yang to leak out. I was hoping that I'd seize him and mate with him so that I might become a golden mortal of the Grand Monad. Hardly did I anticipate that this ape would see through my disguise and take him away instead. If he had untied me and let me down, the Tang Monk would have fallen right into my hands. He would have indeed been mine, wouldn't he? If I let him get away now just because of a few casual remarks, it means I've planned and worked in vain. Let me call him a couple more times and see what happens. Still tied up in the ropes, the monster-spirit instead employed a gentle breeze to waft some virtuous sentences faintly into the ears of the Tang Monk. This was how she called out to him: "O Master! *If you a living human passed by and refused to free, what God or scriptures could such blindness hope to see?*"

Hearing a summons like that as he rode along, the Tang Monk immediately reined in the horse and called out, "Wukong, let's go and free the girl."

"Master, you're moving along just fine," said Pilgrim. "What makes you think of her again?"

"She's calling after me!" replied the Tang Monk.

"Did you hear anything, 8 Rules?" asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules said, "My oversized ears must have blocked it. I didn't hear a thing."

"Sand-monk, did you hear anything?" asked Pilgrim again. Sand-monk said, "I was walking ahead, toting the luggage, and I didn't pay any attention. I didn't hear anything either."

"Nor did old monkey," said Pilgrim. "Master, what did she say? Why are you the only one who heard the call?"

The Tang Monk replied, "The way she called me makes a lot of sense. She said, *if you a living human passed by and refused to free, what God or scriptures could such blindness hope to see?* As the proverb also puts the matter, *saving one life's better than building a seven-tiered heap.* Let's go quickly and rescue her. It'll be as good as fetching scriptures and worshipping God."

"Master," said Pilgrim with a laugh, "when you want to do well, there's no drug in the world that can cure you! Think how many mountains you've crossed since you left the Land of the East and how many monsters you've encountered since you began your journey to the West. Without fail they managed to have you captured and brought into their caves. When old monkey came to rescue you, the iron rod he used had beaten thousands upon thousands to death. Today there's only one life of a monster-spirit, and you can't leave her. Do you've to rescue her?"

"O disciple!" said the Tang Monk. "As the ancients said, *don't fail to do good even if it's small; don't engage in evil even if it's small.* Let's go rescue her."

"If you put it that way, Master," said Pilgrim, "you must assume the responsibility, because old monkey can't bear it. If you've made up your mind to rescue her, I dare not admonish you too much. For if I do, you'll get mad after a while. You may go and rescue her as you please."

"Don't talk so much, ape-head!" said the Tang Monk. "You sit here while 8 Rules and I go rescue her."

Returning to the pine forest, the Tang Monk asked 8 Rules to untie the ropes that had the girl bound to the tree from the waist up, and to use his rake to dig the lower half of her body out from the ground. Stamping her feet and straightening out her skirt, the fiend followed the Tang Monk out of the forest most amiably. When they met up with Pilgrim, he began to snicker uncontrollably.

"Brazen ape!" scolded the Tang Monk. "Why are you laughing?"

"I'm laughing," replied Pilgrim, "because *when times are right, good friends you'll hail; a fair lady will greet you'd fortune fail!*"

"Wretched ape!" scolded the Tang Monk again. "What rubbish! The moment I left my mum's belly, I became a priest. Now I'm journeying westward by imperial decree and trying to worship God in all sincerity. I'm no seeker of profit or status. How could there be a time when my fortune fails?"

"Master," replied Pilgrim with a laugh, "though you may have been a monk since your youth, all you know is how to read *Threads* and recite the name of God. You're not familiar with the codes and laws of a state. This girl is both young and pretty, and we're after all persons who have left the family. If we travel with her, we may run into wicked people who will send us to court. Regardless of how we profess to be scripture seekers and God worshippers, they may accuse us of fornication. Even if we're cleared of that charge, they may still have us convicted of kidnapping. You'll be expelled from your priesthood and beaten till you're half-dead; 8 Rules will be sent into the army and Sand-monk will be sentenced to hard labour. Even old monkey will find it hard to extricate himself from such a messy affair. I may be smart-mouthed but no amount of haggling on my part will clear us of indiscretion."

"Stop this nonsense!" snapped Tripitaka. "I'm determined to save her life. How could she involve us in any trouble? We're taking her with us. If anything arises, I'll assume the responsibility myself." "You may talk like that, Master," said Pilgrim, "but you don't realise that what you're doing won't save her but will only harm her." Tripitaka said, "I rescued her out of the forest so that she might live. How could she be harmed instead?"

"When she was tied up in the forest," replied Pilgrim, "she might have lasted five to seven days, possibly up to half a month but without rice to eat, she would have starved to death. Even in that situation however, she would have died with her body preserved intact. Now you've freed her and brought her with you without realising, of course, that you happen to be riding a horse swift as the wind. We may be able to follow you on our feet, not having really any choice in the matter but the girl has such tiny feet that she moves with great difficulty. How could she possibly keep up with you? If by chance she drops behind, she may well run into a tiger or a leopard that will swallow her with one gulp. In that case, haven't you harmed her life?"

"Indeed!" said Tripitaka. "It's a good thing you saw things this way. What shall we do?"

"Lift her up and let her ride with you," said Pilgrim. "How can I ride with her?" asked Tripitaka, and he fell into silent thought.

"How can she proceed?" pressed Pilgrim. "Let 8 Rules carry her on his back," said Tripitaka. Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Idiot's getting lucky!"

"A long distance has no light load!" said 8 Rules. "How can I be getting lucky if I'm asked to carry someone on my back?"

"But you've such a long horn," said Pilgrim, "long enough in fact to stick it behind you to flirt with her once she is on your back. Don't you've an advantage there?" When 8 Rules heard this, he pounded his chest and jumped up and down. "That's no good! That's no good!" he bellowed. "If Master wants to beat me a few times, I'm willing to take the pain but it'll be quite messy for me if I put her on my back. All his life, Elder Brother has loved to set people up by planting false evidence. I can't carry her!"

"All right, all right!" said Tripitaka. "I can still manage to walk a few steps. Let me get down and walk slowly with her. 8 Rules can lead the horse." Breaking into loud guffaws, Pilgrim said, "Idiot is really getting the business. Master's looking after you by asking you to lead the horse!"<sup>5</sup>

"This ape-head is mouthing absurdity again!" said Tripitaka. "The ancients said, 'Though a horse can travel a thousand miles, it can't get there without human guidance.' If I walk slowly on the road, would you like to leave me behind, too? If I move slowly, you must also move slowly; we can certainly walk down the mountain with this nun. When we arrive at some human household, we can leave her there, and that will have completed our task of rescuing her."

"What Master says is quite reasonable," said Pilgrim. "Please proceed quickly." As Tripitaka walked forward, Sand-monk toted the luggage, 8 Rules led the horse and the girl, and Pilgrim held up his iron rod. They had not covered more than twenty or thirty miles when it was getting late, and there came into their view again a towered building with ornate roof carvings. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, "that must be either a monastery or temple. Let's ask for one night's lodging, and we can proceed tomorrow."

"You spoke well, Master," said Pilgrim. "Let's move along, all of us."

As soon as they reached the gate, Tripitaka gave them this instruction: "Stand away from the door, all of you and let me go ask for lodging. If it's convenient, someone will come to call you." All of them stood beneath the shade of some willow trees but Pilgrim gripping his iron rod, stood guard over the girl. The elder strode forward and saw that the temple gate was so badly rotted that it was all crooked and bent. When he pushed it open to have another look, he was filled with grief, for he found *the long corridors quiet, an old temple desolate. Mosses filled the courtyard and weeds choked the path. Only the fireflies served as lanterns and frog-croaks acted for water clocks.* All at once the elder could not hold back his tears. *Truly the walls were unused and collapsing; the chambers, forlorn and crumbling. Over 10 piles of broken bricks and tiles there all bent pillars and snapped beams. Green grasses grew both front and back; dust buried the incense alcove. The bell tower stood in ruin, the drum had no skin; the crystal chalice was cracked and chipped. God's gold frame lacked lustre; Arhats lay prone east and west. Guanyin rain-soaked, was reduced to clay, her willow vase fallen to earth. No priests would enter during the day; only foxes rested here by night. You heard only the wind's thunderous roar in this hiding place of all tigers and leopards. Walls on all 4 sides had collapsed without doors to fence in the house.* <sup>6</sup>Also a testimonial poem says:

A very old temple in disrepair: decayed, declining – no one seems to care.  
The fierce wind fractures the guardians' faces and heavy rain a god-heads defaces.  
The Arhats have fallen, they're strewn about; homeless, a local spirit sleeps without.  
2 sorry sights for 1 to look upon: the bronze bell's grounded for the belfry's gone.

Forcing himself to be bold, Tripitaka walked through the second-level door and found that the belfry and the drum tower had both collapsed. All there was left was a huge bronze bell standing on the ground: the upper half was white as snow and the lower half was blue-green like indigo. It had been there for many years, see: rain had whitened the upper part of the bell and the dampness of the earth had coated the lower part with copperas. Rubbing the bell with his hand, Tripitaka cried out: "O bell! You used to *make thunderous peal, on a tower hung high or boom carved-beam tones to the distant sky or ring in the dawn when the roosters crow or send off the twilight when the sun dropped low. The bronze-melting, I wonder where he's and whether the smith who forged you still exists. These two, I think, are now for Hades bound: they've no traces and you've no sound!*"

As the elder loudly lamented in this manner, he unwittingly disturbed a temple worker who was in charge of incense and fire. When he heard someone speaking, he scrambled up, picked up a piece of broken brick, and tossed it at the bell. The loud clang so scared the elder that he fell to the ground; he struggled up and tried to flee, only to trip over the root of a tree and stumble a second time. Lying on the ground, the elder said, "O bell! *While this humble cleric laments your state, a loud clang suddenly reaches my ears. No one takes the road to Western Heaven, I fear, and thus you've become a spirit over the years.*"

The temple worker rushed forward and raised him up, saying, "Please rise, Venerable Dad. The bell has not turned into a spirit. I struck it, and that is why it clanged."

When he raised his head and saw how ugly and dark the worker looked, he said, "You'd be some sort of goblin or fiend? I'm no ordinary human but someone from the Great Tang. Under my command are disciples who can subdue the dragon and tame the tiger. It'll not be easy to preserve your life if you run into them!"

Going to his knees, the temple-worker said, "Don't be afraid, Venerable Dad. I'm no fiend, only a temple worker in care of the fire and incense in this monastery. When I heard your virtuous lament just now, I was about to step out and receive you. Then I was afraid you might be some kind of perverse demon knocking at our door so I picked up a piece of brick to toss at the bell – just to calm my own fears before I dared come out. Venerable Dad, please rise."

Only then did the Tang Monk collect his wits and say, "Keeper, you nearly frightened me to death! Please take me in."

The worker led the Tang Monk straight through the third-level door, the inside of which he found to be quite different from the outside. He saw *walls of cloud-patterns built by bluish bricks and a main hall roofed in green glazed tiles. Yellow gold trimmed the saintly forms; white jade slabs made up the steps. Green light exercised on the Great Hero Hall; zealous airs rose from the Pure Alcove. On The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness Hall colourful designs soared like clouds; on the Transmigration Hall painted flowers heaped up elegance. A pointed vase tipped the triple-layered eave; a brocade top lined the 5-Blessings Tower. 1000 bamboos rocked the priestly beds; 10000 green pines lit up the Religious gate. Golden light shone within the Jade-Cloud Palace; auspicious hues fluttered in the purple mists. With dawn a fragrant breeze blew to all 4 quarters; by dusk the painted drum rolled from a tall mountain. If one'd face the sun to mend a cloak, wouldn't he finish the Book by moonlight?*

*They saw, too lamplight glowing on half the backyard wall and scented mists flooding the whole of central mall.* When Tripitaka saw all this, he dared not enter. "Worker," he called out, "from the front, your place looks so run down but it's so nicely maintained back here. How can this be?"

With a laugh the worker said, "Venerable Dad, there are many perverse fiends and bandits in this mountain. In fair weather they used to rob and plunder all over the region but they would seek shelter in this monastery when the skies were grey. They took down holy images and used them for seat cushions, and they pulled up shrubbery and plants for starting fires. As the monks in our monastery are too weak to contend with them, the ruined buildings up front have been turned over to the bandits as their resting place. New patrons were found to build another monastery in the back, so that the pure and the profane could remain distinct. That's how things are in the West!"

"I see!" replied Tripitaka. As they walked inside, Tripitaka saw on top of the monastery gate these 5 words written large:

Sea-Pacifying Chan Grove Monastery

Hardly had they crossed the threshold when they saw a monk approaching. He looked as such: *wore a cap of wool-silk pinned to the left; a pair of copper rings dangled from his ears. He had on himself a robe of Persian wool; like silver his 2 eyes were white and clear. His hand waving a rattle from Pamirs, he recited some scripture barbaric and queer. Tripitaka could in no way recognise this lama cleric of the Western sphere.* Coming through the door, the lama priest saw what lovely, refined features Tripitaka possessed: broad forehead and a flat top, shoulder-length ears, hands that reached beyond the knees – so handsome in fact that he seemed verily an incarnate Arhat. Walking forward to take hold of him, the lama priest, full of smiles, gave Tripitaka's hand and leg a couple of pinches; he also rubbed Tripitaka's nose and pulled at his ear to express his cordial sentiments. After taking Tripitaka into the abbot's chamber and greeting him, he asked, "Where did the venerable master come from?"

"This disciple's," replied Tripitaka, "someone sent by imperial commission of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go to the Great Thunderclap Monastery of India in the West to seek scriptures from a god. As we arrive in your precious region at this late hour of the day, I come especially to ask for one night's lodging in your noble temple. Tomorrow we'll set out once more. I beg you to grant us this request."

"Blasphemy! Blasphemy!" said the priest, laughing. "People like you and me didn't leave the family with noble intentions. It's usually because the times of our births happened to have offended the Floriated Canopy.<sup>7</sup> Our families were too poor to rear us, and that gave us the resolve to leave home. Since we've all become the followers of God, we'd never speak fraudulent words."

"But mine were honest words!" replied Tripitaka.

"What a distance it is to travel from the Land of the East to the Western Heaven!" said the priest. "There are mountains on the road, there are caves in the mountains, and there are monsters in the caves. You're all by yourself and you seem so young and gentle. You don't look like a scripture seeker!"

"The abbot's perception is quite correct," said Tripitaka. "How could this poor cleric reach this place all by himself? I've three other disciples who are able to open up a road in the mountains and build a bridge across the waters. It is their protection that has enabled me to reach your noble temple."

"Where are your three worthy disciples?" asked the priest.

"Waiting outside the monastery gate," replied Tripitaka.

"Master," said the priest, growing alarmed, "you probably have no idea that there are tigers and wolves, fiendish thieves, and weird goblins out to harm people in this region. Even in daytime we dare not travel very far, and we shut our doors before it gets dark. How could you leave people outside at this hour? Disciples, ask them to come in quickly!"

Two young lamas ran out but at the sight of Pilgrim they immediately fell down in fright; when they saw 8 Rules, they stumbled again. Scrambling to their feet, they dashed to the rear, crying, "Holy Dad, you've rotten luck! Your disciples have disappeared. There are just three or four fiends standing outside the gate."

"What do they look like?" asked Tripitaka. One of the young priests said, "One had a thunder-god beak, another a pestle-like horn, and a third had a blue-green face with fangs. By their side there was a girl, rather heavily made up."

"You'd not possibly know that those three ugly creatures happen to be my disciples," said Tripitaka, smiling. "The girl however, is someone whose life I saved back in a pine forest."

"O Holy Dad!" cried the young priest. "Such a handsome master like yourself, why did you find such ugly disciples?"

"They may be ugly," replied Tripitaka, "but they are all useful. You'd better hurry and invite them inside. If you wait a while longer, that one with the thunder-god beak, being no human offspring, loves to cause trouble and he may want to fight his way in."

The young priest hurried out, trembling all over, fell to his knees, and said, "Venerable Dads, Dad Tang asks you to enter."

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, giggling, "all he has to do is to invite us to enter. Why is he shaking so hard?"

"Because he's afraid," replied Pilgrim, "seeing how ugly we're."

"How absurd!" said 8 Rules. "We're born like this! We don't look ugly just for the fun of it!"

"Let's try to fix up the ugliness somewhat," said Pilgrim. Idiot indeed lowered his head to hide his horn in his bosom; while he led the horse and Sand-monk toted the luggage, Pilgrim herded the girl with his rod in the rear as all of them walked inside. Going through the ruined buildings and 3 levels of doors, they reached the inside where they tethered the horse and set the luggage on the ground

before entering the abbot's chamber to greet the lama priest. When they had taken their proper seats, the priest led out some seventy young lamas who also greeted the pilgrims. Then they began preparing a vegetarian meal to entertain the guests. Truly *merit must start with a merciful thought; a priest lauds a monk when Religion thrives.*

At Sea-Pacifying Monastery Mind Monkey knows the fiend; in the black pine forest 3 pupils search for their master

Tripitaka and his disciples arrived at the Sea-Pacifying Chan Grove Monastery where they had a vegetarian meal prepared by the local monks. After the 4 had eaten and the girl too had received some nourishment, it was getting late and lamps were lit in the abbot's chamber. Because they wanted to ask the Tang Monk the reason for seeking scriptures, and because they coveted a glimpse of the girl, the various monks all crowded into the chamber and stood in rows beneath the lamps. Tripitaka said to the lama he had met earlier, "Abbot, when we leave your treasure temple tomorrow, what's the rest of the journey to the West like?"

At once the priest went to his knees, so startling the elder that he hurriedly tried to raise him, saying, "Please rise, abbot. I'm asking you about the journey. Why are you performing ceremony instead?" "Your journey tomorrow, Master," replied the priest, "should proceed along a smooth and level path, and you need not worry. But at this very moment there is a small but rather embarrassing matter. I wanted to tell you the moment you entered our gate but I feared that I might offend you. Only after we've served you a meal do I make so bold as to tell you. Since the venerable master has come from such a long way in the East, you must be tired, and it is perfectly all right that you'd rest tonight in the room of this humble cleric. But it will not be convenient for this nun, and I wonder where I'd send her to sleep."

"Abbot," said Tripitaka, "you needn't suspect that we master and disciples are harbouring some perverse intentions. We passed through a black pine forest earlier and found this girl bound to a tree. Sun Wukong, my disciple, refused to rescue her but I was moved by my Religious compassion to have her released and brought here. Wherever the abbot now wishes to send her to sleep is all right with me."

"Since the master is so kind and generous," said the priest gratefully, "I'll just ask her to go to the Deity-King Hall. I'll make a bed of straw behind Holy Dad Deity-King, and she can sleep there."

"Very good! Very good!" said Tripitaka. Thereupon the young priests led the girl to go to sleep at the back of the hall.

After the elder had bidden the other priests good night, everyone left. "You all must be tired," said Tripitaka to Wukong. "Let's rest now so that we may rise early."

All of them thus slept in the same place, for they wanted to guard their master and dared not leave his side. Gradually the night deepened. Truly *all sounds had ceased as the moon rose high; the temple<sup>1</sup> grew silent for no one walked by. The silver stream glistened with astral showers when tower-drums hastened the change of hours.* Leaving them to rest through the night, now Pilgrim rose by dawn and at once told 8 Rules and Sand-monk to pack and ready the horse so that they might ask their master to set out again. The elder however, was still sleeping at that moment. Pilgrim walked up to him and called out, "Master."

The master raised his head slightly but did not answer. "Master," asked Pilgrim, "what's the matter with you?"

"I don't know why," replied the elder with a groan, "but my head seems light, eyes feel puffy, and I ache all over!"

On hearing this, 8 Rules touched him and found him feverish. "I know," said Idiot, giggling. "You saw last night that the rice's free, ate a bowl too many, and then went to sleep with a blanket over your head. You've indigestion!"

"Rubbish!" snapped Pilgrim. "Let me find out from master what the true reason's."

"I got up in the middle of the night to relieve myself, and I forgot to put on my cap," said Tripitaka. "I must have been chilled by the wind."

"That's more like it," replied Pilgrim. "Can you travel at all?"

"I can't even sit up," said Tripitaka. "How could I mount the horse? But then I don't want to delay our journey either!"

"You'd not speak like that, master!" said Pilgrim. "As the proverb says, *once a teacher, always a dad*; since we've become your disciples, we're like your sons. The proverb also says: *you needn't rear your children with silver and gold; that they treat you kindly is good to behold.* If you don't feel well, you needn't mention anything about delaying our journey. Stay here for a few days. What's wrong with that?"

Thus the brothers all ministered to their master, hardly realising that *the dawn passed, the noon came, and dusk set in; the good night withdrew at the break of day.* Time went by swiftly and 2 days had passed before the master sat up on the third day and called out, "Wukong, I was so sick these last two days that I didn't think of asking you: that nun who got back her life, did anyone send her some rice to eat?"

"Why worry about her?" said Pilgrim with a laugh. "You'd be concerned with your own illness."

"Indeed! Indeed!" said Tripitaka. "Please help me get up, and bring out my paper, brush, and ink. Go and borrow an inkstand from the monastery."

"What for?" asked Pilgrim.

"I want to write a letter," said the elder, "in which I'll also enclose the travel rescript. You may take that up to Chang'an and ask for an audience with Emperor Taizong."

"That's easy," said Pilgrim. "Old monkey may not be very able in other matters but I'm the best postman in the whole wide world. When you finish your letter, I'll send it to Chang'an and hand-deliver it to the Tang emperor with a somersault. Then I'll come back here with another somersault – before your brush and inkstand are dry! But why do you want to send a letter? Tell me a little of its contents and then you may write."

Shedding tears, the elder said, "This is what I intend to write: *Three times your priestly subject raises his hands to greet my sage ruler, long may he live! By lords civil and martial let this be read, let four hundred nobles hear what's said: when I left the East that year by decree, god on Spirit Mount I'd hoped to see. I didn't anticipate such ordeals or in midway such afflictions foresee. This monk now gravely ill, can't proceed, and God's gate seems far as Heaven's gate. I've no life for scriptures, my toil's vain; some other seeker I beg you ordain.*"

When Pilgrim heard these words, he could not refrain from breaking into uproarious laughter. "Master," he said, "you're just too weak! A little illness and you already entertain such thoughts! If you get any worse, if it truly becomes a matter of life and death, all you need is to ask me. Old monkey's ability enough to pose the following questions: 'Which Yama king dares make this decision? Which judge of Hell's the gall to issue the summons? And which ghostly summoner would come near to take you away?' If I'm the least bit annoyed, I may well bring out that temperament that greatly disturbed the Celestial Palace and with my rod flying, fight my way into the Region of Darkness. Once I catch hold of the Ten Yama Kings, I'll pull their tendons one by one and even then I'll not spare them!"

"O Disciple!" said Tripitaka. "I'm gravely ill! Please don't talk so big!"

Walking up to them, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, Master says the situation is not good, and you insist that it is. That's awfully embarrassing! We'd make plans early to sell the horse and hock the luggage so that we can buy a coffin for his funeral before we scatter."

"You're babbling again, Idiot!" said Pilgrim. "You don't realise that Master was the second disciple of our God Siddhartha, and originally he was called Elder Gold Cicada. Because he slighted the Law, he was fated to experience this great ordeal."

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "even if Master did slight the Law, he had already been banished back to the Land of the East where he took on human form in the field of slander and the sea of strife. After he made his vow to worship God and seek scriptures in the Western Heaven, he was bound whenever he ran into monster-spirits and he was hung high whenever he met up with demons. Hasn't he suffered enough? Why must he endure sickness as well?"

"You'd not know about this," replied Pilgrim. "Our old master fell asleep while listening to God expounding the Law. As he slumped to one side, his left foot kicked down one grain of rice. That is why he is fated to suffer three days' illness after he has arrived at the Region Below."

Horried, 8 Rules said, "The way Old bull sprays and splatters things all over when he eats, I wonder how many years of illness I'd have to go through!"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "you've no idea either that a god isn't that concerned with you and other creatures. But as people say: *rice stalks planted in noonday sun take root as perspiration runs. Who knows of this food from the soil each grain requires bitterest toil?* Master's still a more day to go but he'll be better by tomorrow."

Tripitaka said, "I feel quite different from yesterday, for I'm terribly thirsty. Could you find me some cool water to drink?"

"That's good!" remarked Pilgrim. "When Master wants to drink, it's a sign that he's getting better. Let me go fetch some water."

Taking out the alms-bowl, he went immediately to the incense kitchen at the rear of the monastery to fetch water. There however, he came upon many priests who were sobbing, their eyes all red-rimmed, though they dared not weep aloud. "How could you priests be so petty?" asked Pilgrim. "We stay here for a few days but we fully intend to thank you and pay you back for the rice and firewood when we leave. Why do you behave in such a low-class manner?"

Greatly flustered, the priests knelt down to say, "We dare not! We dare not!"

"What do you mean by you dare not?" said Pilgrim. "I suppose the big appetite of the priest with a long horn has hurt your assets."

"Venerable Dad," replied one of the priests. "Even in this desolate temple of ours, there are altogether over a hundred monks, old and young. If one of us were to feed one of you for one day, we'd still manage to take care of all of you for over a hundred days. Would we dare be so niggardly and particular about your upkeep?"

"If not," asked Pilgrim, "why are you crying?"

"Venerable Dad," said another priest, "we don't know what sort of perverse fiend has invaded this monastery of ours. Two nights ago two young priests were sent to toll the bell and beat the drum but they never came back. When we searched for them in the morning, we found their caps and sandals abandoned in the rear garden; their skeletons remained but their flesh was eaten. You've all stayed in our monastery for three days and we've lost six priests. That is why we brothers cannot help fretting and grieving. Since your venerable master is indisposed however, we dare not make this known to you, though we can't refrain from shedding tears in secret."

On hearing this, Pilgrim was both startled and delighted, saying, "No need to say any more. There must be a fiendish demon here causing harm to people. Let me exterminate it for you."

"Venerable Dad," said a priest, "the monster who isn't a spirit won't possess spiritual powers but those who're, will undoubtedly have the ability to soar on the cloud, fog, penetrate, and leave the Region of Darkness. The ancients have put the matter quite well: *don't believe the honesty of the honest; be wary of the unkindness of the kind.* Venerable Dad, please forgive me for what I'm about to say: if you'd catch this monster for us and rid our desolate temple of this root of calamity, it would indeed be our greatest fortune. But if you can't catch him, there'll be quite a few inconveniences."

"What do you mean by quite a few inconveniences?" asked Pilgrim.

"To tell you the truth, venerable dad," replied the priest, "though there're some one hundred monks in our rustic temple they all left their homes in childhood, *find knives to cut hair grown long, and patch often their unlined garments. Once they rise at dawn and wash their faces, they salute with pressed palms to embrace the Great Way; at night take pains to burn incense, sincere and earnest to recite god's name. Raising their heads to gaze at god's form on the ninth-grade lotus, The Triyāna means<sup>2</sup> and the vessel of mercy afloat on the religion-mega, <sup>3</sup>the world-honoured Śākya of Jetavana they vow to see. Lowering their heads to search their hearts. Having received the five prohibitions having transcended the world amid the myriad creatures and phenomena the stubborn void and formless form they'd perceive. When the dānapatis<sup>4</sup> are present, the old and the young, the tall and the short, the fat and the thin – each one will beat the wooden fish and strike the golden stone, hustling and bustling to recite two scrolls of the Lotus Thread or a book of the Water Litany of King Liang. <sup>5</sup>When the lords of alms are absent, the new, the old, the unfamiliar, the familiar, the rustic, and the urbane – each one will press his palms together and close his eyes in silence and darkness to meditate on the rush mat and bolt the gate beneath the moon. <sup>6</sup>We leave those orioles and birds to chatter and bicker by themselves: they don't belong in our convenient, merciful Mahayana. That's why we're unable to tame tigers and subdue dragons; we've no knowledge of fiends, nor can we recognise spirits. If you manage to annoy that fiendish demon, Venerable Dad, he may find a hundred of us priests barely sufficient for one meal. Then we'll all fall upon the Wheel of Transmigration; second, our Chan grove and old temple will be destroyed; and third, at Siddhartha's assembly we'll not enjoy even half a mite of glory. These are some of those inconveniences!"*

When Pilgrim heard the priest delivering a speech like that anger flared up from his heart and wrath sprouted by his bladder. "How stupid can you monks be?" he shouted. "All you know is about the monster-spirit. You've no idea of old monkey's exploits?"

"In truth we don't," replied the priests softly.

"I'll give you only a brief summary today," said Pilgrim. "Listen to me, all of you! *I did tame tigers and subdue dragons on Mount Flower-Fruit; I did ascend to Heaven's Palace to cause great havoc. In hunger I picked up Lord Lao's elixir and chewed up – not many – just two or three pellets! In thirst I took up the Jade Emperor's juice and drank – so lightly – six or seven cups! When my gold-pupil eyes, not black or white, flare wide open, the sky will pale and the moon darken; when I hold up one golden-hooped rod, not too long or short, I'll come and go without a trace. Why mention big spirits or small fiends! Who's afraid of their hex or devilry! The moment when I give chase, the fleeing will flee, the shaking will shake, the hiding will hide, and the fearful will fear; the moment when I catch them, they'll be sawed, burned, ground, and pounded. Something like Eight Mortals crossing the sea, each revealing magic ability. Monks and priests, I'll seize this monster-spirit for you to see. Only then you'll realise I'm old monkey!"*

When those various monks heard this, they all nodded and said to themselves, "There's to be some basis for this burglar bonze to open his big mouth and utter these big words!"

Each of them, therefore, responded to Pilgrim agreeably but the lama priest spoke up: “Wait a moment! Since your master’s indisposed, you’d not feel so eager to catch this monster-spirit. As the proverb says, *a prince at a banquet will either be drunk or fed; a hero on the field will either be hurt or dead*. If the two of you engage in battle, you may well involve your master in some difficulty and that’s not too appropriate.”

“Right you’re!” replied Pilgrim. “Let me take some cold water to my master first and then I’ll return.” Picking up the alms-bowl and filling it with water, he left the incense kitchen and went directly back to the abbot’s chamber. “Master,” he cried, “drink some cold water.”

Racked by thirst, Tripitaka raised his head, held the water to his mouth, and took a mighty draught. Truly *in thirst one drop of liquid’s like sweet dew; the true cure arrives and the illness heals*. When Pilgrim saw that the elder was gradually regaining his strength and that his features seemed to brighten, he asked, “Master, can you take some rice soup?”

“This cold water,” replied Tripitaka, “is so much like an efficacious elixir that at least half of my illness is gone. If there is any rice soup, I can eat some.” At once Pilgrim shouted repeatedly, “My master’s well. He wants some soup and rice.” His cries sent those monks scampering to wash the rice, cook it, make noodles, bake biscuits, steam breads, and make rice-noodle soup. They brought in in fact four or five tables of food but the Tang Monk could take only half a bowl of rice soup. Pilgrim and Sand-monk managed to finish one tableful while the rest all went into 8 Rules’ stomach. After they had cleared away the utensils and lighted the lamps, the monks retired.

“How many days have we stayed here?” asked Tripitaka.

Pilgrim said, “Three whole days. By dusk tomorrow, it’ll be the fourth day.”

“How much have we fallen behind in our journey?” Tripitaka asked again.

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “you can’t make that sort of calculation. Let’s leave tomorrow.”

“Exactly,” said Tripitaka. “Even if I’m still not quite well, I’d better get going.”

“In that case,” said Pilgrim, “I’d better catch a monster-spirit tonight.”

“What sort of monster-spirit do you want to catch this time?” asked Tripitaka, growing alarmed.

“There’s a monster-spirit in this monastery,” said Pilgrim. “Let old monkey catch it for them.”

“O Disciple!” said the Tang Monk. “I’m not even recovered yet and you want to start something like this already! Suppose that fiend’s great magic powers and you can’t catch it. Wouldn’t you put me in jeopardy?”

“You do love to put me down!” said Pilgrim. “As old monkey goes about subduing fiends everywhere, have you ever seen him an underdog? I may not move my hands but the moment I do, I’ll win.”

Tugging at him, Tripitaka said, “Disciple, the proverb puts the matter well: *do someone a favour when you’ve that favour; spare a person when you can afford to spare. Can restiveness compare with contentedness? Is tolerance nobler than belligerence?*”

When the Great Sage Sun heard his master pleading so passionately with him, refusing to let him subdue a fiend, he had little choice but to tell the truth, saying, “Master, I don’t want to hide this from you but the fiend has devoured humans at this place.”

Horried, the Tang Monk asked, “What humans has the fiend devoured?”

“We’ve stayed in this monastery for three days,” replied Pilgrim, “and six young priests of the monastery have been devoured.”

The elder said, “*When a hare dies, the fox grieves; for a creature will mourn its own kind*. If a fiend’s devoured the priests of this monastery, I’m a priest, too. I’ll let you go but you must be careful.”

“No need to tell me that,” said Pilgrim. “Old monkey will eliminate it the moment he raises his hands.” *Look at him!* In the lamplight he gave instructions for 8 Rules and Sand-monk to guard their master and then leaped out of the abbot’s chamber jubilantly. When he reached the main God hall to look around, he found that there were stars in the sky though the moon had not yet risen. The hall was completely dark, so he exhaled some mortal fire from within himself to light the crystal chalice; then he went to strike the bell on the east and toll the bell on the west. Thereafter with one shake of his body he changed into a young priest no more than twelve or thirteen years of age. Draped in a clerical robe of yellow silk and wearing a white cloth shirt, he recited scriptures as his hand struck a wooden fish. He waited there in the hall till about the hour of the first watch and nothing happened. By the hour of the second watch, when the waning moon had just risen, he heard all at once a loud roar of the wind. *Marvellous wind! Its black fog blotted out the sky; sombre clouds bedimmed the earth. All 4 quarters seemed splashed with ink or coated with some indigo paint. At first it lifted up dust and sprayed dirt; afterwards it toppled trees and felled forests. Though stars glistened through lifted dust and sprayed dirt, the moon paled as trees toppled and forests fell. It blew till Chang’e tightly hugged the Suoluo tree, the jade hare spinning searched for its dish of herbs; 9 Star Officials all shut their doors, Dragon-Kings of 4 Seas all closed their gates; city gods looked for young demons in their shrines but mid-air divines could not soar on clouds. Yama of Hades sought to find horse-faces as judges dashed madly to run down their wraps. It rocked the boulders on Kunlun summit and churned up the waves in rivers and lakes*. When the wind subsided, he immediately felt the fragrance of orchids and perfumes and he heard the tinkling of girdle jade. He rose slightly and raised his head to look. Ah! It was a beautiful young girl, walking straight up the hall. “Oo-li, oo-la!” recited Pilgrim, pretending to recite scriptures.

The girl walked up to him and hugged him saying, “Little elder, what sort of scriptures you’re reciting?”

“What I vowed to recite!” replied Pilgrim.

“Everyone’s enjoying his sleep,” said the girl. “Why are you still reciting?”

“I made a vow!” replied Pilgrim. “How could I not do so?”

Hugging him once more, the girl kissed him and said, “Let’s go out back and play.” Turning his face aside deliberately, Pilgrim said, “You’re kind of dumb!”

“Do you know physiognomy?” asked the girl.

“A little,” replied Pilgrim. “Read my face,” said the girl, “and see what sort of a person I’m.”

“I can see,” said Pilgrim, “that you’re somewhat of a slut or debauchee driven out by your in-laws!”

“You’ve not seen a thing!” exclaimed the girl. “You’ve not seen a thing! *I’m no slut or debauchee whom my in-laws compelled to flee. By my former life’s poor fate I was given too young a mate who knew nothing of marriage rite and drove me to leave him this night*. But the stars and the moon so luminous this evening have created the affinity for you and me to meet. Let’s go into the rear garden and make love.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim nodded and said to himself, “So those several stupid monks all succumbed to lust and that was how they lost their lives. Now she’s trying to fool even me!” He said to her, “Lady, this priest is still very young, and he doesn’t know much about lovemaking.”

“Follow me,” said the girl, “and I’ll teach you.” Pilgrim smiled and said to himself, “All right! I’ll follow her and see what she wants to do with me.”

They put their arms around each other’s shoulders, and, hand in hand, the two of them left the hall to walk to the rear garden. Immediately tripping Pilgrim up with her leg so that he fell to the ground, the fiend began crying “Sweetheart” madly as she tried to pinch his stinky foot.<sup>8</sup>

“My dear child!” exclaimed Pilgrim. “You do want to devour old monkey!” He caught her hand and, using a little tumbling technique, flipped the fiend on to the ground. Even then, the fiend cried out, “Sweetheart, you certainly know how to make your old lady fall!”

Pilgrim thought to himself, “If I don’t move against her now, what am I waiting for? As the saying goes, *strike first and you’re the stronger; delay and you’ll not live longer!*”

Hands on his hips, he snapped his torso erect and leaped up to change into the magic appearance of his true form. Wielding his golden-hooped iron rod, he struck at the girl’s head. The fiend, too was somewhat startled, thinking to herself, “This young priest’s quite formidable!” She opened her eyes wide to take a careful look and found that her opponent was in fact the disciple of Elder Tang, the one with the surname of Sun. She was however, not the least intimidated. She was a spirit who has *a nose of gold and fur like snow. She dwells in tunnels underground where every part’s both safe and sound. A breath she nourished three centuries before had sent her a few times to Mount Spirit’s shore. Of candles and flowers once she ate her fill, she was banished by Siddhartha’s will to be Pagoda-Bearer’s cherished child; Prince Nata took her as his sister mild. She’s no mythic, sea-filling bird<sup>9</sup> of the air nor a turtle<sup>10</sup> that a sacred mountain bears. Of Lei Huan’s magic sword<sup>11</sup> she has no fear; to her, Lü Qian’s cutlass<sup>12</sup> cannot go near. Scurrying here and there, she defies the River Han or Yangzi’s breadth and length; scampering up and down the heights of Mount Tai or Heng is her special strength. When you behold her looks seductive and sweet, who’d think that she’s a rodent-spirit in heat?* Proud of her own vast magic powers, she casually picked up a pair of swords and began to parry left and right, to slash east and west, causing loud jangling and clanging. Though Pilgrim was somewhat stronger, he could not quite overtake her. A cold gust rose everywhere, and the waning moon had now lost its light. Look at the two of them engaged in this marvellous battle in the rear garden! *A cold wind rose from the ground; the waning moon released faint light. Quiet was the Religious palace and forlorn the spirit porch. But the rear garden was some battlefield! Great Master Sun, a sage from Heaven and the furry girl, a queen of women, they took up a contest in magic powers. One hardened a woman’s heart to scold this black bonze; 1 widened his eyes of wisdom to glower at a girl. When the swords in both hands flew, who’d recognise a nun?*

*When the single rod attacked, he was more vicious than a live Lightning-guardian. The golden-hooped crackled like thunderbolts; the white steel flashed forth like luminous stars. Kingfishers dropped from jade towers; Mandarin ducks broke on the golden hall. Apes wailed as the Szechwan moon dimmed; wild geese called from the vast southern sky. The 18 Arhats all shouted bravos in secret; the 32 deities all became terror-stricken*. As the Great Sage Sun became more and more energetic, the blows of his rod hardly ever slackening, the monster-spirit suspected that she would be unable to withstand him much longer. All at once her knitted brows gave her a plan, and she turned to flee. “Lawless wench!” shouted Pilgrim. “Where are you going? Surrender instantly!”

But the monster-spirit refused to answer and kept retreating. She waited until Pilgrim was about to catch up with her and then ripped off her flower slipper from her left foot. Reciting a spell and blowing a mouthful of magic breath on it, she cried, “Change!” and it changed into her appearance, both hands wielding the swords to attack. Her true self in a flash turned into a clear gust and disappeared.

*Alas! Isn’t she once more the star of calamity for Tripitaka?*

She swept into the abbot’s chamber and immediately abducted Tripitaka Tang. Silently and invisibly they rose straight to the clouds, and in a twinkling of an eye they reached Mount Void-Entrapping. After they entered the Bottomless Cave, she asked her little ones to prepare a vegetarian wedding feast. Pilgrim fought on anxiously till he found an opening and struck down the monster-spirit with one blow of the rod. Only then did he discover that it was merely a flower slipper. Realising that he had been duped, Pilgrim rushed back to see his master but he was nowhere to be found. Only Idiot and Sand-monk were there, chattering noisily about something. Maddened, Pilgrim lost all regard for good or ill as he raised high his rod and screamed, “I’m going to slaughter both of you! I’m going to slaughter both of you!”

Idiot was so terrified that he did not know where to flee. Sand-monk however, was a general from Mount Spirit after all. When he saw that things had become complicated, he turned gentle and mild as he walked forward and went to his knees. “Elder Brother,” he said, “I think I know what the matter is. You want to strike both of us dead so that you can go home and not go rescue Master.”

“I’ll slaughter both of you,” replied Pilgrim, “and then I’ll go rescue him by myself.”

“Elder Brother, how can you speak like that?” said Sand-monk with a smile. “Without the two of us, you’ll be reduced to the condition of the proverb: *one silk fibre is no thread; a single hand cannot clap*. O Elder Brother! Who’s going to look after the luggage and the horse for you? *Better that we emulate Guan and Bao<sup>13</sup> dividing their gold than to imitate Sun and Pang<sup>14</sup> in their matching of wits*. As the ancients said, *to fight the tiger you need brothers of the same blood; to go to war requires a troop of dads and sons*. I beg you to spare us from this beating. By morning we’ll unite with you in mind and effort to go search for Master.”

Though Pilgrim had vast magic powers, he was also a most sensible person. When he saw Sand-monk pleading like that, he at once relented, saying, “Eight Rules, Sand-monk, get up, both of you. We’ve to exert ourselves tomorrow to find Master.” When Idiot learned that he was spared, he was ready to promise Pilgrim half of the sky! “O Elder Brother,” he said, “let Old bull take care of everything!” With so much on their minds the three brothers, of course, could hardly sleep. How they wished that *one nod of their heads would bring forth the rising sun, one blow of their breaths would scatter all the stars!*

Sitting up till dawn, the 3 of them immediately prepared to leave. Some of the monks in the monastery soon appeared, asking, “Where’re the venerable dads going?”

“It’s hard for me to say this!” replied Pilgrim, chuckling. “I boasted yesterday that’d catch the monster-spirit for you. I’ve not succeeded but lost our master instead. We’re about to go find him.”

Growing fearful, the monks said, “Venerable Dad, such a small matter of ours has now caused your master trouble. Where do you plan to go to look for him?”

“There’ll be a place for us to look,” replied Pilgrim.

“In that case,” said one of the monks quickly, “there’s no need to hurry. Please have some breakfast first.” Thereupon they brought in several bowls of rice soup, and 8 Rules finished them all. “Good monks!” he cried. “After we’ve found our master, we’ll return for some more fun!”

“So you still want to come back here to eat!” said Pilgrim. “Why don’t you go to the Deity-King Hall instead and see if that girl is still around?”

“No, she isn’t, she isn’t!” said another priest hurriedly. “She stayed there for one night but she vanished the next day.”

In great delight Pilgrim at once took leave of the monks and asked 8 Rules and Sand-monk to tote the luggage and lead the horse to head for the east. “You’ve made a mistake, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules. “Why do you want to head for the east instead?”

"How could you know?" asked Pilgrim. "That girl who was tied up in the black pine forest the other day – these fiery eyes and diamond pupils of old monkey have long seen through her. All of you thought that she was such a fine person! It was she who devoured the monks, and it was she who abducted Master. You rescued a fine nun indeed! Now that Master is taken, we've to search for him on the road we came from."

"Very good! Very good!" said the 2 of them sighing with admiration. "Truly there's finesse in your roughness! Let's go! Let's go!"

The 3 of them hurried back to the forest, and all they saw were *endless clouds, boundless fog, layered rocks, winding path; criss-crossing tracks of foxes and hare; tigers, wolves, and leopards crowding there. Of the fiend in the woods there was no trace where Tripitaka was they knew not the place.* Growing more anxious, Pilgrim whipped out his rod and with one shake of his body, changed into that appearance that had greatly disturbed the Celestial Palace: with three heads and six arms wielding three rods, he delivered blows madly all over the forest. When he saw that, 8 Rules said, "Sand-monk, Elder Brother has gone berserk. Unable to locate Master, he's having a fit of anger!" Pilgrim's rampage however, managed to turn up two old men; one was the mountain god, and the other the local spirit. "Great Sage," they said as they went to their knees, "the mountain god and the local spirit have come to see you."

"What a miraculous stick!" exclaimed 8 Rules, "He waved it around and beat out both this mountain god and this local spirit. If he beat it around some more, he might even get himself Jupiter!"

"Mountain god, local spirit," said Pilgrim as he began his interrogation. "How ill-behaved you're! You've persisted in making bandits your allies in this place, and when they succeed, they undoubtedly sacrifice livestock in your honour. Now you even band together with a monster-spirit and join her in abducting my master. Where have you hidden him? Confess at once, and I'll spare you a beating!" Horrified, the two deities said, "The Great Sage has wrongly blamed us. That monster-spirit is not in this mountain, nor is she subject to our dominion. But these minor deities do happen to know a little about the source of the wind last night."

"If you know," said Pilgrim, "tell it all!"

The local spirit said, "That monster-spirit has abducted your master to a place about one thousand miles due south of here. There is a mountain there by the name of Void-Entrapping, in which there is a cave called Bottomless. The mistress of the cave is the monster-spirit who took your master."

Startled by what he heard, Pilgrim dismissed the deities and retrieved his magic appearance. In his true form he said to 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "Master's very far away."

"If he's very far," said 8 Rules, "let's soar on the clouds to get there." Dear Idiot! He mounted a violent gust to rise first, followed by Sand-monk astride the clouds. Since the white horse was originally a dragon prince, he too trod on the wind and fog with the luggage on his back. Then the Great Sage also mounted his cloud somersault, and they all headed straight for the south. In a little while they saw a huge mountain blocking their path. Pulling back the horse, the three of them stopped their clouds to find that the mountain had a *peak rubbing the blue sky, a top joining the green void. Divers trees by the thousands grew all around; birds and fowl, cacophonous, flew here and there. Tigers, leopards walked in bands; deer, antelope moved in herds. Where it faced the sun, rare flowers and plants grew fragrant; on the shady parts the ice and snow stayed stubborn. The rugged summits; steep precipices; a tall peak erect; a deep winding brook. Dark pine trees and scaly rocks – a sight that struck fear in a traveller's heart! No shadow of one woodsman was ever seen, nor a trace of an herb-gathering youth. Wild beasts before you'd raise the fog as foxes all around called up the wind.* 8 Rules said, "O Elder Brother! Such a rugged mountain must harbour fiends!"

"That goes without saying!" replied Pilgrim. "For as the proverb puts it, *a tall mountain will always have fiends. Could rugged peaks be without spirits?* Sand-monk, you and I'll remain here and Eight Rules can go down to the mountain fold to see which the better road to take is. He'd also find out whether there's in fact a cave, whether its doors are open, and after he's made a thorough investigation, we can then go find Master and rescue him."

"Old bull's so unlucky!" said 8 Rules. "You always put me up to something first!"

Pilgrim said, "You said last night that you'd take care of everything. How could you go back on your word now?"

"No need to start a quarrel!" said 8 Rules. "I'll go." Putting down his muckrake, Idiot shook loose his clothes and leaped down the mountain empty-handed. He left.

098

*The fair girl seeks the yang; Primal spirit guards the Way*

8 Rules having bounded down the mountain, discovered a narrow path that he followed for some 5 or 6 miles. Suddenly he caught sight of 2 female fiends bailing water from a well. How did he know so readily that they were female fiends? Because he saw that each of them had a chignon on her head about fifteen inches tall and adorned with tiny bamboo strips. It was a most unfashionable style! Idiot walked up to them and cried, "Monstrous fiends!"

Enraged by what they heard, the fiends said to each other, "This monk is such a rogue! We don't know him, nor have we ever tittle-tattled with him. How can he address us as monstrous fiends just like that?" Greatly annoyed, the fiends picked up the poles they had brought along for carrying water and brought them down on 8 Rules' head.

Since Idiot had no weapons to ward off the blows, they succeeded in whacking him quite a few times. Holding his head, he ran back up the mountain, crying, "O Elder Brother, let's go back! Those fiends are fierce!"

"How fierce?" asked Pilgrim. 8 Rules replied, "In the mountain valley there were two female monster-spirits bailing water from a well. I called them once and they beat me several times with poles."

"What did you call them?" asked Pilgrim. "I called them monstrous fiends," answered 8 Rules.

"That," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "was too small a beating!"

"Thanks for looking after me!" said 8 Rules. "My head's swollen, and you claim that it's too small a beating!"

Pilgrim said, "Haven't you heard of the proverb? *Gentility gets through the world; obduracy takes you nowhere.* They're monsters of this region but we're monks who came from afar. Even if you possessed arms all over your body, you'd still have to be more tactful. You walk up to them and immediately call them monstrous fiends! Would they overlook you and want to hit me instead? *A human person must put propriety and poems first.*"

"I'm even more ignorant of that!" said 8 Rules.

Pilgrim said, "When you're devouring humans in the mountain during your youth, did you've any knowledge of two kinds of wood?"

"No, what are they?" asked 8 Rules.

"One is poplar, and the other's rosewood," said Pilgrim. "Poplar's quite pliant by nature, and it is used by craftsmen for carving holy images or making Siddharthas. The wood's dressed in gold and painted; it is decorated with jade and other ornaments. Tens of thousands of people burn incense before it in their worship, and it enjoys countless blessings. Rosewood on the other hand is hardy and tough by nature. Oil factories therefore harvest it to make caskets: they bind the planks with iron rings and then they hammer them with mallets. The wood's toughness is what causes it to suffer like that."

"O Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules. "If you'd told me a story like that a bit sooner, I'd have been spared their beating."

"You must go back and question them further," said Pilgrim.

"But they'll recognise me," protested 8 Rules.

"You may go in transformation," Pilgrim answered.

8 Rules asked, "Even if I go in transformation, Elder Brother, how should I question them?"

Pilgrim replied, "After you've transformed yourself, walk up to them and give them a proper greeting. See how old they are. If they're about the same age as we're, address them as Ladies. If they are somewhat older, then call them Mesdames."

"What poppycock!" said 8 Rules, chuckling, "This place is so far from home. Why bother to be so intimate?"

"It's not a matter of intimacy," said Pilgrim, "but of getting information from them. If they had indeed abducted Master, we'd move against them immediately. If not, we certainly don't want to be delayed from going elsewhere to finish our business, do we?"

"You're right," said 8 Rules, "I'll go back."

Dear Idiot! Stuffing the rake inside the sash around his waist, he walked down to the mountain valley where with one shake of his body he changed into a dark, stout-ish priest. He swaggered up to the fiends and saluted deeply, saying, "Mesdames, this humble cleric salutes you."

Delighted, the 2 of them said to each other, "Now this priest's quite nice! He knows how to salute and greet people properly."

"Elder," asked one of them, "Where did you come from?"

"Where did I come from," said 8 Rules.

"Where are you going to?" she asked again.

"Where am I going to," he replied again.

"What is your name?" she asked a third time.

"What is my name," he replied a third time.

Laughing, the fiend said, "This priest's nice all right but he doesn't seem to know anything, not even his own history, except to repeat what people say."

"Mesdames," asked 8 Rules, "why are you bailing water?"

The fiend said, "You may not know this, priest but last night the mistress of our house abducted a Tang Monk into our cave whom she wanted to entertain. Since the water in our cave is not clean enough, she sent the two of us here to fetch fine water that is a product of yin-yang copulation.<sup>1</sup> She is also having a vegetarian banquet prepared for the Tang Monk, for she wants to marry him this evening."

When he heard this, Idiot turned quickly to race up the mountain, crying, "Sand-monk, bring out the luggage quickly and let's divide it up!"

"Second Elder Brother," asked Sand-monk, "why do you want to divide it up again?"

"After we've divided it up," replied 8 Rules, "you may return to the River of Flowing Sand to devour humans, and I'll go back to the Gao Village to see my in-laws. Big Brother can go to Mount Flower-Fruit to call himself a sage while the white horse can return to the ocean to become a dragon. Master has already married the monster-spirit in the cave. We'd all scatter to pursue our own livelihood."

Pilgrim said, "This Idiot is babbling again!"

"Only your son's babbling!" replied 8 Rules. "Just now, those two monster-spirits bailing water told me that they were preparing a vegetarian banquet for the Tang Monk. After he has been fed, they will be married."

"That monster-spirit may have Master imprisoned in the cave," said Pilgrim, "but he must be waiting with bulging eyes for us to go rescue him. And you're speaking in this manner!"

"How are we going to rescue him?" asked 8 Rules. Pilgrim said, "The two of you can lead the horse and pole the luggage while we follow those two female fiends. We'll let them lead us up to their door, and then we'll begin the attack together."

Idiot had little choice but to comply. From a great distance Pilgrim trained his eyes on those two fiends who walked deep into the mountain for some twenty miles and then vanished from sight. "Master must have been seized by daytime ghosts!" exclaimed a startled 8 Rules.

"What fine perception!" said Pilgrim. "How could you tell their true forms so readily?" 8 Rules said, "Those fiends were carrying their water as they walked along, and then they suddenly disappeared. Aren't they daytime ghosts?"

"I think they have crawled inside a cave instead," said Pilgrim. "Let me take a look."

Dear Great Sage! He opened wide his fiery eyes and diamond pupils to scan the entire mountain but he saw no movement whatsoever. Below a sheer cliff however, there was a small terrace with elegant openwork carvings decorated with floral patterns of five colours and a towered gate with triple eaves and white banners. When he walked up to the terrace with 8 Rules and Sand-monk to look, he saw these large words inscribed on the gate: Mount Void-Entrapping, Bottomless Cave.

"Brothers," said Pilgrim, "that monster-spirit has erected this edifice here but I wonder where she has put the door."

"It can't be very far," said Sand-monk. "Let's make a careful search." As they turned to look around, they discovered a huge boulder, the surface area of which had to be over ten square miles, beneath the towered gate at the foot of the mountain. In the centre of this boulder there was an opening to a cave, roughly the size of a large earthen vat that had been crawled over so frequently that the surface of the entrance had grown shiny and smooth.

"O Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules. "This is the entrance through which the monster-spirit goes in and out."



When he looked at it, Pilgrim said, "How strange! Both of you know that old monkey has captured quite a few monster-spirits since he became a guardian of the Tang Monk. But I've never seen a cave-dwelling quite like this. 8 Rules, you go down first and see how deep it is. Then I can go in and try to rescue Master."

Shaking his head, 8 Rules said, "This is hard! Very hard! Old bull is quite ponderous. If I trip and fall in, I wonder if I can reach bottom after two or three years!"

"Is it that deep?" asked Pilgrim. "Just look!" said 8 Rules.

The Great Sage saluted himself at the rim of the cave opening and peered downward. Egads! It was deep! All around it had to be more than three hundred miles. "Brothers," he said, turning around, "it's very deep indeed!"

"You may as well go back!" said 8 Rules. "You can't rescue Master!"

"How can you talk like that!" replied Pilgrim. "You mustn't be lazy, nor you'd be slothful. Let's put the luggage down and tether the horse to the pillar of the towered gate. Use your rake and Sand-monk can use his staff to bar the entrance. I'll go in to investigate. If Master's indeed inside, I'll use my iron rod to attack the monster-spirit and chase her out. When she reaches the entrance up here, you two can cut off her escape route. That's cooperation from within and without. Only after we've slaughtered the spirits in this way can we hope to rescue Master." The 2 of them obeyed. With a bound, Pilgrim leaped into the cave as *10000 coloured clouds rose beneath his feet; auspicious air veiled his side in layers*. In a little while, he reached the depths of the cave that however, he found to be bright and clear. Like the outside world, this place had sunlight, the rustle of wind, flowers, fruits, and trees. Delighted, Pilgrim said to himself, "What a marvellous place! It makes me think of the Water-Curtain Cave that Heaven bestowed on old monkey when he came into the world. But this place's also a cave-Heaven, a blessed region!" <sup>2</sup>as he looked about, he saw also a double-eaved towered gate surrounded by pines and bamboos. Inside the gate there were many buildings and he thought to himself again, "This has to be the residence of the monster-spirit. Let me go in and do a little detection. But wait! If I enter like this, she'd recognise me. I'll go in transformation."

Making the magic sign and shaking himself, he changed at once into a fly and flew silently up to the towered gate to spy on the monster-spirit. There he could see that the fiend was sitting in the centre of a thatched pavilion. She appeared vastly different from the way she looked at the time when she was rescued in the pine forest or when Pilgrim fought with her in the monastery. Her makeup was lovelier than ever: *her tresses piled high in a crow-nest bun, she wore a flowery jacket of green wool. A pair of tiny feet like lily hooks; her 10 fingers looked like spring's tender shoots. Her round, powdered face was a silver disc; smooth like a cherry were her lips of rouge. Solemn and proper seemed her beauteous form, more delightful than Chang'e's of the moon. This day she caught the scripture-seeking monk with whom at once she would share her bed*. Pilgrim made no noise so that he could hear what she had to say. After a little while, she parted her cherry lips and called out in a most amiable manner: "Little ones, prepare the vegetarian feast quickly! After Brother Tang Monk's been fed, he and I'll be married."

"So, she means business!" said Pilgrim, smiling to himself. "I thought that 8 Rules was talking nonsense, just for fun. I'll fly in there and search around for Master. I wonder how stable his mind is at this time. If he has been moved by this fiend, I'll leave him here." He spread his wings at once and flew in; there beyond the east corridor, in a room shuttered with red, translucent paper on top and opaque ones at the bottom, the Tang Monk was seated.

Crashing headfirst right through the papered trellis, Pilgrim darted onto the bald head of the Tang Monk and cried, "Master!" Tripitaka recognised his voice immediately and said, "Disciple, save me!"

"I can't do that, Master!" replied Pilgrim. "That monster-spirit is preparing a banquet for you, after which she plans to marry you. If she bears you a boy or a girl, that will be your priestly posterity. Why are you so sad?"

On hearing this, the elder spoke through clenched teeth: "Disciple, after I left Chang'an, I took you in at the Mountain of the Two Frontiers. Since we began our journey westward, when did I ever use meat? On which day did I ever harbour a perverse thought? Now I'm caught by this monster-spirit who wants me as her mate. If I lose my true yang, let me fall upon the Wheel of Transmigration and be banished to the rear of the Mountain of Darkness! Let me never find release!"

"Don't swear!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "If you truly desire to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven, old monkey will take you there."

"But I've quite forgotten the way we came in," said Tripitaka.

Pilgrim said, "Don't tell me that *you've* quite forgotten the way! This cave of hers is not a place where you can walk in and out casually. It's a cave you crawl in from above; after I rescue you, we must crawl back out from below. If we're lucky, we'll find the mouth of the cave and get out. If we're unlucky, we may not find the entrance and we may suffocate."

"If it's so difficult, what are we going to do?" asked Tripitaka, his eyes brimming with tears.

"That's nothing! That's nothing!" said Pilgrim. "The monster-spirit wants to drink with you, and you've no choice but to comply. But when you pour for her, do it rather quickly so that there will be bubbles. I'll change into a mole cricket and fly into the juice bubbles. When she swallows me inside her stomach, I'll squeeze through her heart and tear her guts apart. After I kill the monster-spirit like that, you'll be able to get out."

"Disciple," said Tripitaka, "what you tell me is rather inhuman."

"If all you want to practice is virtue," said Pilgrim, "your life will be finished. A monster spirit is the very cause of harm for humans. How can you pity her?"

"All right! All right!" said Tripitaka. "But you must stay close to me."

Truly that *Great Sage Sun firmly guarded Tripitaka Tang; the scripture monk relied solely on Handsome Monkey King*. Hardly had the master and disciple finished their discussion than the monster-spirit, having completed her preparations, walked near the east corridor and opened the locked door. "Elder."

She called out but the Tang Monk dared not reply. She called him again but he still did not dare reply. Because he thought of the proverb: *The mouth parts and energy disperses; the tongue moves and strife comes to birth*.

Then he reflected further on the fact that if he absolutely refused to open his mouth, she might grow violent and instantly end his life. Truly it was that *caught between 2 ills, his mind asked his mouth; patient, thinking hard, his mouth asked his mind*. As he pondered his dilemma, she called out to him once more, "Elder!"

The Tang Monk had little choice but to answer her, saying, "Lady, I'm here." When the elder gave a reply like that, he felt as if his flesh had been drawn down to Hell by the weight of 1000 pounds. Now everyone has been saying that the Tang Monk was a priest wholly sincere in his determination to go worship God and seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. *How'd I answer a monster like that?*

This was a moment of the gravest danger, a time of life and death for him. He did this because he simply had no alternative. Though he gave such a reply on the outside, he was not in any way swayed by lust within. When the monster-spirit heard such a reply from the elder however, she pushed open the door and raised up the Tang Monk with her hands. She then held his hand and put her arm around his back, nuzzling him with her head and whispering into his ear. Look at her! She put on a thousand kinds of coy looks and romantic airs, hardly realising that Tripitaka was filled up to his neck with annoyance! Smiling secretly to himself, Pilgrim said, "I wonder if Master will be swayed by such seductive behaviour of hers!" Truly *the true monk meets beauty for he's demon-chased. This lissom fiend's most worthily praised!*

*Like willow leaves part her faintly drawn brows; her pink cheeks match peach-blossoms on the boughs. 2 tiny feet her embroidered shoes half show; chignons on both sides rise like nests of crow. When she, all smiles, takes up the master's hand, the cassock's perfumed by sweet orchid-gland.* <sup>3</sup>The monster-spirit led Tripitaka near the thatched pavilion and said, "Elder, I've prepared a cup of juice which I'd like to drink with you."

"Lady," replied the Tang Monk, "this humble cleric keeps a special diet."

"I know that," said the monster-spirit. "I've sent specially for the pure water from the summit since the water in our cave's unclean, a product of the copulation of yin and yang, also ordered a vegetarian banquet for your enjoyment." The Tang Monk stepped inside the pavilion with her to look around. Indeed he saw *beneath the door drapes of colourful silk and filling the court incense from golden beasts. Laid out there were black enamelled tables and black lacquered bamboo trays. On the black enamelled tables were many fine dainties; the bamboo trays had rare vegetarian goods. Crab-apples, olives, lotus meat, grapes; musk-berries, hazelnuts, lychees, longans; chestnuts, water chestnuts, dates, persimmons; walnuts, almonds, kumquats, oranges; the fruits of 1 whole mountain, vegetables most in season: bean curds, wheat glutens, wood ears, fresh bamboo shoots button mushrooms, flat mushrooms, mountain herbs, yellow Sperms, white and yellow-flowered vegetables sautéed in clear oil; flat and round string beans mixed in mellow sauces; cucumbers, calabashes, ginkgo nuts, and ripe-turnips. Skinned eggplants made like partridges and winter melons carved like fangdan.* <sup>4</sup>*Taros cooked till soft, sugar-coated, and white turnips boiled with vinegar. Hot peppers and gingers, best of every kind; the salty and plain well balanced 1 will find.* Revealing her slender, jade-like fingers and holding high a shiny gold cup, she filled it with fine juice and handed it to the Tang Monk, saying, "Brother Elder, you wonderful man, please drink this cup of love!"

Terribly embarrassed, Tripitaka took the juice, sprayed a few drops of it toward the air with his fingers, and said this silent prayer: "Those various guardian deities, the Guardians of Five Quarters, the Four Sentinels, hear me. This disciple, Chen Xuanzang's been indebted to the Nun Guanshiyin since leaving the Land of the East for sending you deities to give me secret protection so that I may salute at Thunderclap and seek scriptures from a god. Now I'm caught on the way by a monster-spirit who wants to force me to marry her. She's handing me this cup of juice to drink. If this juice's indeed fit to drink by someone keeping a vegetarian diet, your disciple will make an effort to drink it in hopes that he'll still be able to see God and achieve his merit. If it's unfit to drink, if the juice indeed causes this disciple to transgress his commandment, may he fall into eternal perdition!"

The Great Sage Sun however, had taken on a delicate transformation, and at that critical moment he was whispering into his master's ear. His words, of course, could be heard only by Tripitaka and no one else. Since he knew that his master was rather fond of dietary juice made of grapes, he told him now to drink it. Having no choice but to follow his disciple's prompting, the master drank it and hurriedly poured another cup to present to the fiend. Indeed, he poured it so quickly that there were some bubbles. Pilgrim changed at once into a tiny mole cricket and flew right into the bubbles. The monster-spirit however, took the cup in her hand and, instead of drinking immediately, saluted a couple of times to the Tang Monk. Only after she had bashfully said a few words of love to him did she raise the cup. By now the bubbles had already dissipated and the insect was fully visible. Not able to recognise that it was a transformation of Pilgrim, the monster-spirit thought that it was a mere insect and immediately scooped it up with her little finger and tried to throw it away. When Pilgrim saw that things were not turning out as he had hoped, he knew that it would be difficult to get inside her stomach. At once he changed into a hungry old hawk. Truly he has *jade claws, golden eyes, and iron quills; a brave, fierce form for battling the clouds. The sly fox, the wily hare on seeing him will swiftly flee to farthest land. Hungry, he hunts birds in the wind; sated, he soars to Heaven's gate. His old fists, most deadly, are hard as steel; even the sky he finds too low in flight.* <sup>5</sup>He darted up and stretched out his jade-like claws; with a loud crash he overturned the banquet tables and smashed to pieces all those fruits and vegetables, all those saucers and cups. Then he flew out of the place, abandoning the Tang Monk. The heart, bladder of the monster-spirit almost burst with fear, the bones, and flesh of the Tang Monk too turned numb. Trembling all over, the monster-spirit embraced him and said, "Brother Elder, where did this creature come from?"

"Your poor monk's no idea," replied Tripitaka.

"I've taken great pains," said the fiend, "to prepare this vegetarian banquet for your enjoyment. But I wonder where this wretched hairy beast came from to smash up all my utensils?"

"Mistress," said the various little fiends, "smashing the utensils is not half as bad as spilling all those dietary foods on the ground. How can they be used now that they are defiled?"

Tripitaka of course knew that this was the power of Pilgrim but he dared not reveal it. That monster-spirit said, "Little ones, I know. It must be that Heaven and Earth are displeased by my seizure of the Tang Monk and they send down this creature. Take away the broken utensils and prepare some other juice and food. It doesn't matter whether they are dietary or not. I'll ask Heaven to be the marriage go-between and Earth to be the witness. Then the Tang Monk and I'll be married."

Thereupon they sent the elder back to the room in the east corridor. Pilgrim flew up out of the place and changed into his true form as he reached the entrance of the cave. "Open up," he cried.

8 Rules laughed and said, "Sand-monk, Elder Brother's here." The 2 of them lowered their weapons for Pilgrim to jump out. 8 Rules walked forward to tug at him saying, "There's a monster-spirit? Our master's there?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" replied Pilgrim.

"Master must be suffering in there," said 8 Rules. "Is he tied up or is he trussed up? Do they want to steam him or boil him?"

"Nothing of that sort," said Pilgrim. "She only wants to prepare a vegetarian banquet so that she can do that thing with him."

"Lucky you! Lucky you!" said 8 Rules. "You must have drunk some wedding juice!"

"O Idiot!" said Pilgrim. "Master's life is in danger! What wedding juice have I drunk?"

"Why did you come back then?" asked 8 Rules.

Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how he found the Tang Monk and how he went into transformation. Then he said, "Brothers, no more of these foolish thoughts. Master is here. When old monkey goes back this time, he will certainly rescue him."

At once he entered the cave again and changed into a fly to alight on the towered gate. There he heard the fiend panting hard and giving the following instruction: "Little ones, just bring me some food for the offering. I don't care whether it's vegetarian or not. I'll entreat Heaven and Earth to be my go-between and witness, for I'm determined to marry that priest."

On hearing this, Pilgrim smiled and said to himself, "This monster-spirit's completely shameless! She's a priest locked up at home in broad daylight for fun and games! But let's not rush things. Let old monkey go inside to have a look first."

With a buzz he flew to the east corridor where he saw his master sitting in the room with clear teardrops rolling down his cheeks. Pilgrim crawled in there and landed on his bald head, crying, “Master!” Recognising his voice, the elder jumped up all at once and said spitefully through clenched teeth, “Wretched ape! Any other person who has the gall to do something, at least the gall is wrapped inside the person’s body. But in your case, it’s your gall that has you wrapped inside! How much could those utensils that you smashed by flaunting your magic transformation be worth? But if you provoke the monster-spirit and arouse her lechery, she’ll not bother about dietary laws and will insist on copulating with me. What am I to do then?”

“Master,” said Pilgrim softly, trying to placate him, “please don’t be offended. I’ve a plan to rescue you.”

“How will you rescue me?” asked the Tang Monk.

“When I flew up just now,” replied Pilgrim, “I noticed that she has a garden in the rear. Trick her to go play with you in the garden. I’ll rescue you then.”

“How will you rescue me in the garden?” asked the Tang Monk once more.

Pilgrim said, “When you get to the garden with her, you’d stop walking once you reach the peach trees. Let me fly up to one of the branches and change into a red peach. You pretend that you want to eat a fruit and pluck off the red one that I change into. Undoubtedly she will want to pluck one off also. Insist on giving yours to her. The moment she takes a bite, I’ll enter her stomach. Then I’ll punch through her belly and tear her guts apart. When she’s dead, you’ll be free.”

“If you’ve the ability,” said Tripitaka, “all you need is to fight with her. Why must you want to get inside her belly?”

“Master, you’re just not too sensible!” said Pilgrim. “If this cave of hers were easy to get into and out of, then I’d fight with her. But it is not; in fact, the crooked paths here are exceedingly hard to negotiate. If I move against her, the whole nest of them, old and young, may have me bogged down. What shall I do then? I’ve to use this underhanded method to mop things up!”

Nodding his head in belief, Tripitaka said only, “You must stay close to me.”

“I know! I know!” said Pilgrim. “I’m on your head!”

After master and disciple had formulated their plan, Tripitaka got up and, supporting himself on the shutters, called out: “Lady! Lady!” When the monster-spirit heard him, she ran near to him and said, giggling, “Dear<sup>6</sup> Wonderful Man, what do you want?”

“Lady,” said Tripitaka, “Since I left Chang’an to journey westward, there’s not a day when I didn’t have to climb a mountain or ford a river. When I stayed at the Sea-Pacifying Monastery the other day, I caught a bad cold. Only today’s my condition improved somewhat for I’ve been perspiring. I’m grateful to you for bringing me to your mortal residence but having sat here all day I feel sickly again. There’s a place where you can take me for some relaxation?”

Highly pleased, the fiend said, “If dear wonderful man shows this kind of interest, I’ll be delighted to take you strolling in the garden,” she then cried out, “little ones, bring me the key to open the garden. Sweep out the path.” Pushing open the shutters, this monster-spirit led the Tang Monk out by the hand. *Look at those many little fiends of hers, all with oiled hair and powdered faces, all sinuous and lissom!* They surged around the Tang Monk and headed straight for the garden. *Marvellous monk! He found no ease in this troop of satin and silk; played deaf and dumb in such brocaded grove. He only could face God who had an iron mind and heart; no mortal fond of juice and sex would succeed in scripture-fetching.* When they reached the entrance of the garden, the monster-spirit whispered lovingly to him saying, “Dear wonderful man, enjoy yourself here. You may truly relax and unwind.”

Walking hand in hand with her into the garden, the Tang Monk raised his head to look around. It was indeed a lovely place. What he saw were *paths twisting and turning, profusely coated with specks of green moss; handsome silk-gauze windows, each faintly enclosed by embroidered screens. When a gentle breeze rises, western silk and eastern damask spread out fluttering; when a fine rain recedes, ice-flesh and jade-substance appear seductive. The sun warms fresh apricots, red like the skirts that mortals hang out to dry; the moon illumes the plantain, green like feathered fans whirled by a goddess. By the painted walls on 4 sides orioles recite amid 10000 willows; around the leisure cottage butterflies swirl through the yard’s cherry-apples. Look further at the fragrance-holding, the green-moth, the juice-dispelling, and the romance alcoves 1 on top of the other where the rolled-up red curtains are drawn by hooks like shrimp-whiskers. Look also at the grief-relieving, the purity-draped, the brow-painting, and the 4-rains kiosks, each a noble edifice with floriated plaques inscribed with seal scripts. Look at the crane-bathing, the goblet-washing, the moon-pleasing, and the tassel-cleansing pools where golden scales glisten among green lilies and reeds; there are, too the ink-flower, the strange-chest, the proper-weal, and the cloud-adoring arbours where mellow juice floats within jade flasks and cups. Beyond and before the pools and kiosks there are rocks from Lake Tai, purple-blooming, parrot-falling, and rocks of Sichuan Rivers around which the green tiger-whisker rush are planted. East and west of the alcoves and arbours, there are false wooden, kingfisher-screen, wind-whistling, jade-agaric hills, on each grow thickets of phoenix-tail bamboos. The tumi<sup>7</sup> and the cinnamon rose props near the stand of swing all seem like brocade curtains and silk drapes. The pine-and-cypress, the magnolia facing the rosebush kiosks both resemble a green city’s embroidered veils. The shaoyao<sup>8</sup> rails, the peony groves, their flowers vie for denseness in purple and red; the yehe<sup>9</sup> terrace, the white jasmine fence both bring forth grace and glamour year after year. The magnolia adorned with drops of dew should be sketched or drawn; the hibiscus blazing red toward the sky should be hymned or recited. Speaking of scenery, let’s not boast of Langyuan or Penglai; to compare such beauty 1 need not count Yao’s yellow or Wei’s purple.* <sup>10</sup>*In late spring when 1 fences with grass, this garden lacks only divine blooms of jade.* The elder walking hand in hand with the fiend to enjoy the garden, could hardly look at all the rare flowers and exotic plants. After going past many arbours and kiosks and entering gradually as it were, the lovely scenery, he saw all at once that they had arrived in front of the peach orchard. Pilgrim gave his master’s head a pinch and the elder knew immediately what he meant. Flying up to one of the branches, Pilgrim with one shake of his body changed into a peach, a lovely red one. The elder said to the monster-spirit, “Lady, you’ve here *fragrant blooms in the yard, ripened fruits on the boughs – fragrant blooms in the yard that bees vie to sip; ripened fruits on the boughs that birds fight to pluck.* But why’s it that on this particular peach tree the peaches are both red and green?”

With a giggle the monster-spirit said, “When Heaven’s lacking in yin and yang, the sun and the moon won’t shine; when the Earth’s lacking in yin and yang, male and female can’t be distinguished. The same principle applies to the fruits of this peach tree. Those on the sunny side are ripened first by the warmth and that’s why they’re red; those on the shady side will grow but without the benefit of the sun and that’s why they’re still green. This is the principle of yin and yang.”

“I thank my lady for the instruction,” said Tripitaka, “for this humble cleric indeed had no idea this was so.” He immediately reached forward and plucked a red peach, and the monster-spirit too went and plucked a green one. Saluting, Tripitaka presented the red peach to the fiend, saying, “Lady, you’re fond of colours, so please take this red peach. Give me the green one to eat.”

The monster-spirit indeed exchanged it with him, saying in secret delight to herself, “Dear monk! A true man<sup>11</sup> indeed! We’re not husband and wife even for one day, and he’s already so affectionate!” Her delight in fact caused her to behave more cordially than ever to the Tang Monk. When he took the green peach and began eating it at once, the monster-spirit was only too pleased to keep him company. Opening her cherry lips to reveal her silvery teeth, she was about to take a bite. But Pilgrim Sun had always been impetuous. Before she could sink her teeth into the fruit, he immediately rolled inside her mouth and somersaulted through her throat down to her stomach. Terribly frightened, the monster-spirit said to Tripitaka, “O Elder, this fruit is really something! How could it roll down there before I even bit it?”

“Lady,” said Tripitaka, “a newly ripened fruit is most edible. That’s why it goes quickly.”

“But I’ve not even spat out the pit,” said the monster-spirit, “and it has gone down already.”

“When you’re in such an excellent mood, Lady,” replied Tripitaka, “you’ve a good appetite. That’s why it goes down even before you manage to spit out the pit.”

In her stomach, Pilgrim changed back to his true form and cried, “Master, don’t banter with her. Old monkey has already scored!”

“Disciple, do try not to be too harsh,” replied Tripitaka. Hearing that, the monster-spirit said, “Whom are you talking to?”

“To my disciple, Sun Wukong,” replied Tripitaka.

“Where is Sun Wukong?” asked the monster-spirit.

“In your stomach, of course!” replied Tripitaka. “Isn’t he the red peach you just ate?”

Horrified, the monster-spirit said, “Finished! Finished! If this ape-head has crawled inside my belly, I’m as good as dead! Pilgrim Sun, what do you plan to do after using all your schemes and plots to get inside my belly?”

“Not much!” replied Pilgrim spitefully inside her. “I’ll just devour *your six loaves of liver and lung,* <sup>12</sup>*your triple-haired and seven-holed heart. All five viscera I’ll clean out, one rattling spirit you’ll become!*” On hearing this, the monster-spirit was scared out of her wits. Trembling all over, she embraced the Tang Monk to say, “O Elder! I thought we’re *fated to be by one scarlet thread*<sup>13</sup> *bound, two hearts as one like fish in water found. Who knows birds of love will thus be parted that spouses will sever broken-hearted? Our affair fails for Blue Bridge tide*<sup>14</sup> *is high; our meeting’s vain as temple incense*<sup>15</sup> *dies. Drawn to each other we must now disperse. Which year will I once more with you converse?*”

Inside her belly Pilgrim heard her speaking in this manner, and he was afraid that the compassionate elder might be deceived again. At once he began to wave his fists and stamp his feet, to assume boxing postures and do gymnastic exercises with his four limbs, nearly punching through her leather bag in the process. Unable to endure the pain, the monster-spirit dropped to the ground and dared not speak for a long time. When Pilgrim found that she was silent, he thought that she might be dead and decided to ease up somewhat. Catching her breath, she cried, “Little ones where are you?” When those little fiends entered the garden, they all knew how to behave. Instead of congregating in one place, they scattered to play – plucking flowers or fencing with grasses – so as to allow the monster-spirit to flirt freely with the Tang Monk. When they suddenly heard the summons, they ran to the spot and found the monster-spirit fallen to the ground, pale and groaning, hardly able even to crawl. Hurriedly they tried to raise her as they crowded around, all asking, “Mistress, what’s wrong? Are you having a heart attack?”

“No! No!” replied the monster-spirit. “Don’t ask but I’ve someone in my stomach! Just get this monk out, quickly, so that my life may be preserved.” Those little fiends indeed went forward and tried to pull the elder out.

“Don’t any of you dare raise your hand!” yelled Pilgrim inside her belly. “If you want to, you yourself must present my master to the outside world. When we get there, I’ll spare you.”

The monster-spirit, of course, had no other motivation than pity for her own life. Struggling to her feet, she swiftly placed the Tang Monk on her back and strode toward the outside. Running after her, the little fiends asked, “Mistress where are you going?” The monster-spirit said, “Let’s get this fellow outside! *If we the moon above the five lakes retain, there’s always a spot to drop the hook again!* Let me find someone else instead.”

Dear monster-spirit! She mounted the cloudy luminosity and immediately reached the entrance of the cave where a loud clangour of arms could be heard. “Disciple,” said Tripitaka, “I can hear the sound of weapons outside.”

Pilgrim said, “It has to be 8 Rules wielding his muckrake. Call him.” Tripitaka at once called out: “Eight Rules!”

8 Rules heard him and said, “Sand-monk, Master’s come out!” The 2 of them removed the rake and the staff and the monster-spirit carried the Tang Monk outside. *Aha!* Truly it is that *mind Monkey, responding within, subdues a fiend; wood and Earth guarding the door receive a sage monk.*

## 099

### Mind Monkey knows the elixir source; fair girl returns to her true nature

Tripitaka was escorted out of the cave by the monster-spirit. Sand-monk drew near and asked, “Master, you’ve come out but where’s Elder Brother?”

“He’s calculating enough,” said 8 Rules, “so he must have accompanied Master out here somehow.”

Pointing at the monster-spirit, Tripitaka said, “Your Elder Brother is in her belly.”

“How dirty and smelly!” said 8 Rules with a giggle, “What’s he doing in her belly? Come out!”

Pilgrim cried out from within: “Open wide your mouth and let me come out!” The fiend opened her mouth as bidden. Pilgrim reduced his size and crawled up to her throat; he was about to go out but fearing that she might bite him, he took out the iron rod and blew his mortal breath onto it crying, “Change!”

It changed into a small nail that propped up the roof of her mouth. With a bound he leaped clear of her mouth, taking along with him the iron rod as he jumped. One stretch of his torso helped him to assume his characteristic appearance, as he struck with uplifted rod. The monster-spirit also picked up her pair of treasure swords and blocked his blow with a loud clang. The 2 of them thus began a fierce battle on the top of the mountain: *double swords flying that slash at the face; a golden-hooped rod that aims at the head. 1 is a Heaven-born ape with a mind-monkey frame; 1 is an Earth-born spirit with a fair-girl form. The 2 of them are full of hate; gladness breeds rancour, causing a mighty bout. That 1 desires primal yang to be her mate; this 1 fights pure yin to form the holy babe. The upraised rod fills the sky with chilly fog; the sword goes forth, the land roils with black dirt. Because the elder’s in quest of God, they strive bitterly showing great power. Water wars with fire to hurt the basic way; yin-yang cannot unite, each drifting free. The 2 engage in such a lengthy brawl that mountain and earth quake as forests sprawl.* When 8 Rules saw them battling in this manner, he began to murmur against Pilgrim. Turning to Sand-monk, he said, “Brother, Elder Brother’s twiddling! When he’s in her just now, he’d have sent her a belly-full-of-red with his fists and crawled out by punching through her stomach. That way he’d have had done with her, wouldn’t he? Why did he have to come out through her mouth and fight with her, allowing her to be so insolent?”

“You’re quite right,” replied Sand-monk, “but Elder Brother, after all, has worked very hard to have Master rescued from a deep cave. Now that he has to fight some more with the monster-spirit, I think Master should sit by himself while you and I go with our weapons to lend some assistance to Elder Brother. Let’s go and knock down that monster-spirit.”

“No! No! No!” said 8 Rules, waving his hand. “He has magic powers but we’re quite useless.”

"What are you saying?" asked Sand-monk. "That's something that will benefit everyone. We may be useless but even our fart can add to the wind!" That Idiot did become aroused for the moment; whipping out his rake, he cried, "Let's go then!"

Abandoning their master, they both mounted the wind and rushed forward to battle, madly delivering blows to the monster-spirit with their rake and staff. The monster-spirit was already having difficulty withstanding Pilgrim by herself; when she saw the two of them, she knew that defeat was certain. Twirling around, she tried to flee.

"Brothers, catch her!" snapped Pilgrim. When the monster-spirit saw that they were pressing, she yanked off the flower slipper from her right foot and blew her mortal breath on it, crying, "Change!" It at once took on her appearance, attacking her pursuers with two swords. She herself with one shake of her body, changed into a clear gust of wind and sped away. Now, you may think that we're only speaking of her defeat and of her retreat out of regard for her own life. How could you know that *this* had to be the turn of events? It must be that the star of calamity had not withdrawn its influence over Tripitaka. As the monster-spirit sped by the cave entrance, she saw Tripitaka sitting all alone beneath the towered gate. Rushing up to him, she snatched him and the luggage as well and bit through the reins; she succeeded in abducting both person and horse into the cave. 8 Rules found an opening and struck down the monster-spirit with one blow of his rake. Then he discovered that it was only a flower slipper. "You two idiots!" said Pilgrim. "It's enough for you to look after Master. Who asked you to come and help?"

"There you're, Sand-monk!" said 8 Rules. "Didn't I tell you not to come? This monkey's sick in his brains! We help him to subdue the fiend but he blames us instead!"

"Where on earth did you subdue a fiend?" Pilgrim said. "When she fought with me yesterday, that fiend tricked me by this ploy of dropping her slipper. I wonder how Master is faring now that you two have left his side. Let's hurry back and look!"

The three of them hurried back but their master indeed had vanished. There was not even a trace of the luggage or the white horse. So astonished was 8 Rules that he dashed back and forth in confusion while Sand-monk searched hither and yon. The Great Sage Sun too was racked by anxiety as he looked everywhere, and then he saw half a rein lying by the side of the road. Picking it up, he could not stop the tears flowing from his eyes. "O Master!" he cried aloud. "When I left I took leave of both man and horse; when I returned I'd see only this rope!" Thus it was that *seeing the saddle he recalled the horse; shedding tears he thought of his kin*. When 8 Rules saw him shedding tears however, he broke into loud guffaws with face raised toward the sky. "You coolie!" scolded Pilgrim.

"You want to disband again!"

"O Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules, still laughing. "It's not like that. Master must have been abducted into the cave once more by the monster-spirit. As the proverb says, 'Success comes only with a third try.' You've entered the cave twice. Now go in a third time, and I'm sure that you'll be able to bring out Master."

Wiping away his tears, Pilgrim replied, "All right! Since things are this way, I've little choice but to go in again. Now that you don't even have to worry about the luggage and the horse, you must take care to guard the entrance." *Dear Great Sage!* He turned and leaped into the cave; not undergoing transformation, he merely retained his characteristic appearance. *Truly of strange-looking cheeks and a valiant mind, he grew up a fiend with great magic strength. His face like a saddle curved up and down; eyes flashed gold beams that blazed like fire. Hard like needles were his whole body's furs; tiger-skin kilt jingled with loud floral bells. In Heaven he crashed through 10000 clouds; his rod in the sea lifted mountainous waves. That day his might beat up the Deity-Kings and repelled 108000 foes. Appointed Great Sage, the Handsome Monkey Sprite used a golden-hooped rod by custom. In the West today displaying his might to save Tripitaka he enters the cave.* Look at him! He stopped the cloudy luminosity after he reached the residence of the monster-spirit where he found the towered gates were all shut. Without regard for good or ill, he broke through with one blow of his rod and barged in. It was completely quiet and not a trace of the inhabitants could be found. The Tang Monk was no longer seen by the east corridor; the furniture in the pavilion and the various utensils had all disappeared. There were some three hundred miles of living space inside the cave, and the monster-spirit had many residences. When she had brought the Tang Monk to this particular spot the time before, Pilgrim had found them. Now that she had abducted the Tang Monk again, she feared that Pilgrim would return to the same place, and so she immediately moved somewhere else. Our Pilgrim was so exasperated that he pounded his chest and stamped his feet, crying, "O Master! You're a misfortune-begotten Tripitaka Tang, a scripture monk forged by calamity! Alas! This road's familiar enough to me. Why aren't you here? Where'd old monkey look for you?"

As he was shouting like this in great annoyance, his nose suddenly caught a whiff of scented breeze. Calming down all at once, he said to himself, "This incense drifted out from the rear. They must be back there." Gripping the iron rod, he strode in but found no movement whatever – only three small chambers. At the back of one of these chambers was a lacquered sacrificial table with open-mouthed dragons carved on both sides. On the table was a huge incense urn of melted gold from which fragrant incense smoke curled upward. Above the urn was hung a large plaque with the following inscription in gold letters: The Tablet of Honoured Dad, Deity-King Li. Slightly below it to one side was another inscription: The Tablet of Honoured Brother Naṭa, the Third Prince. Filled with delight by what he saw, Pilgrim immediately abandoned his search for the fiend or the Tang Monk. He gave his iron rod a squeeze to change it back into an embroidery needle that he could store in his ear. Stretching forth his hands, he took the plaque and the urn and trod on his cloudy luminosity to go back out to the entrance of the cave, hee-hawing in continuous laughter on the way.

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk heard him, they stepped aside to meet him, saying, "Elder Brother, you must have succeeded in rescuing Master, and that's why you're so happy."

"No need for us to go rescue Master," said Pilgrim, still guffawing, "just make our demand known to this plaque." O Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules. "This plaque is no monster-spirit, nor does it know how to speak. Why should we make our demand known to it?"

"Take a look, both of you," said Pilgrim as he placed the plaque on the ground. Sand-monk approached and saw the inscriptions: The Tablet of Honoured Dad Deity-King Li, and The Tablet of Honoured Brother Naṭa, the Third Prince. "What's the meaning of this?" he asked.

"It's something to which the monster-spirit makes offerings," replied Pilgrim. "When I broke into her residence, I found that both persons and things had disappeared. There was only this plaque. She has to be the daughter of Deity-King Li, the younger sister of the third prince who has descended to the Region Below out of profane longings. Disguised as a fiend, she has abducted our master. If we don't demand of the persons whose names appear on this plaque whom should we ask? While the two of you stand guard here, let old monkey take the plaque and go up to Heaven to file charges before the Jade Emperor. That'll make Deity-King Li and his son return our master."

"O Elder Brother!" said 8 Rules. "As the proverb says, 'To charge someone with a mortal offence is itself a mortal offence.' You can't do it unless your cause is just. Besides, do you think that filing charges before the throne is an easy thing? You'd better tell me how you plan to go about it."

"I've my way," said Pilgrim with a laugh. "This plaque and this urn I'll use as evidence. In addition, I'll file a formal, written complaint."

"What are you going to put in that complaint?" asked 8 Rules. "Let's hear it."

Pilgrim said, "This is what I plan to say:

The plaintiff Sun Wukong whose age and birthday are recorded here in the document, is the disciple of the priest, Tripitaka Tang who has been sent by the Tang Court in the Land of the East to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. The complaint I lodge concerns the crime of abetting a monster in kidnapping a human. I hereby accuse Li Jing, the Pagoda-Bearer Deity-King, along with Prince Naṭa, his son, of gross negligence in domestic affairs that caused his own daughter to become a runaway. At the Region Below she had assumed the form of monstrous perversity in the Bottomless Cave of Mount Void-Entrapping, bringing vexation and harm to countless humans. She has, at the moment, abducted my master into the crooked recesses of her habitation where he cannot be found at all. I've no choice but to charge dad and son with an act of great atrocity, for allowing the daughter to become a spirit and to harm people. I beg you, therefore, to sustain in your great mercy my complaint and arrest the culprits, so that perversity may be brought to submission, my master may be rescued, and the guilt of the offenders may be clearly established. In anticipation of your kind assistance, I hereby submit my complaint.

On hearing these words, 8 Rules and Sand-monk were terribly pleased, both saying, "O Elder Brother, your complaint is most reasonable! You'll undoubtedly win the case. You'd better go there at once, for we fear that a little delay may result in the monster-spirit's taking our master's life."

"I'll hurry! I'll hurry!" said Pilgrim. "It'll take me no more than the time needed for boiling tea, or at most for rice to be cooked, to get back here."

Dear Great Sage! Holding the plaque and the urn, he leaped up to mount the auspicious cloud and went straight before the South Heaven Gate. When Deity-Kings Powerful and The Upholder of the Nation who were standing guard at the gate, saw him, both bent low to salute him and dared not bar his way. He was permitted to go straight up to the Hall of Perfect Light where he was greeted by Zhang, Ge, Xu, and Qiu, the four Celestial Masters. "Why has the Great Sage come?" they asked.

"I've a document here," replied Pilgrim, "which I intend to file as a formal complaint."

"This caster of blame!" said one of the astonished masters. "I wonder whom he plans to accuse." They had no choice but to lead him into the Hall of Divine Mists to announce his arrival. He was then summoned into the presence of the Jade Emperor.

After putting down the plaque and the urn and paying homage to the throne, he presented his plaint that the Mortal Ge received and spread out on the imperial desk. When the Jade Emperor had read its content from beginning to end, he signed the document and endorsed it as an imperial decree. Then he commanded Gold Star Venus, Longevity of the West, to take the decree and go to the Cloud-Tower Palace to summon Deity-King Li, the Pagoda-Bearer, to appear before the throne.

"I beg the Heaven Lord to punish him properly," said Pilgrim, walking forward, "or else he may start some other trouble."

The Jade Emperor gave this order also: "Let the plaintiff go along."

"Should old monkey really go along?" asked Pilgrim.

"Since His Majesty has already issued the decree," said one of the Celestial Masters, "you may go with the Gold Star."

Pilgrim indeed mounted the clouds with the Gold Star to reach the Cloud-Tower Palace that was the residence of the Deity-King. There was a divine youth standing in front of the gate who recognised the Gold Star. He went inside at once and announced, "The Holy Dad Gold Star Venus's arrived."

The Deity-King went out to meet his guest; when he saw that the Gold Star was bearing an imperial decree, he asked immediately for incense to be lighted. Then he caught sight of Pilgrim following the Gold Star in, and the Deity-King stirred with anger. Because during the time when Pilgrim caused great disturbance at the Celestial Palace, the Jade Emperor once appointed the Deity-King as the Demon-Subduing Grand Marshal and Prince Naṭa as a god of the Three Charities Grand Assembly. They were to lead the Heaven hosts against Pilgrim but they could not prevail even after several engagements. The defeat of five centuries ago still rankled him, and that was why he became angry. Unable to restrain himself, he asked, "Old Longevity, what's that decree you're bearing?"

"It happens to be a complaint," replied the Gold Star, "lodged against you by the Great Sage Sun."

The Deity-King was already sorely annoyed; when he heard this, he became enraged, saying, "What's he accusing me of?"

"The crime of abetting a monster in kidnapping a human," replied the Gold Star. "After you've lit the incense, you may read it for yourself."

Panting hard, the Deity-King hurriedly set out the incense table; after he had expressed his gratitude toward the sky and respected, he spread out the decree. A careful reading of the document however, sent him into such a rage that he gripped the table with both hands and said, "This ape-head! He has so wrongly accused me!"

The Gold Star said, "Don't get so mad! He happens to have a plaque and an urn for evidence before the throne, and he claims that all those objects point to your own daughter."

"But I've only three sons and a daughter," said the Deity-King. "The eldest is Suvamaṭa who serves Siddhartha as the vanguard of the Law. My second son is Liberation who is the disciple of Guanshiyin at South Sea. My third son Naṭa is with me and attends court night and day as an imperial guardsman. My only daughter, named Zhenying, happens to be only seven years old. She doesn't even know much of human affairs. How could she be a monster-spirit? If you don't believe me, let me carry her out for you to see. This ape-head is mighty insolent! Let's not say that I'm a marshal in Heaven who has received such a high appointment that I'm permitted to execute someone first before memorialising to the throne. Even if I were one of the common people in the Region Below, I'd not be falsely accused. The Law says, 'A false accusation should receive a thrice-heavy penalty.'" He turned to his subordinates with the order: "Tie up this ape-head with the fiend-binding rope!"

The Mighty-Spirit God, General Fish-Belly, and Marshal Lightning-Nature spirit who were standing in a row down at the courtyard, immediately surged forward and tied up Pilgrim. "Deity-King Li," said the Gold Star, "you'd better not start any trouble! He is one of the two persons decreed by the throne to come here to summon you. That rope of yours is quite heavy. If you hurt him in any way, you'll be the loser!"

"O Gold Star!" said the Deity-King. "How could you allow him to file false charges and disturb the peace like that? Please be seated while I cut off this ape-head with the fiend-hacking scimitar. Then I'll return with you to see the throne."

When the Gold Star learned that he was about to raise the scimitar, his heart quivered and his bladder shook as he said to Pilgrim, "You've made a mistake! Filing charges before the throne is no light thing! Why didn't you try to ascertain the truth first? All your foolish doings now may cause you to lose your life. What'll you do?"

Not frightened in the least, Pilgrim said, full of smiles, "Relax, old Minister, it's nothing! Old monkey has to do his own business this way: he must lose first, and then he'll win."

Hardly had he finished speaking when the Deity-King wielded his scimitar and brought it down hard on Pilgrim's head. All at once the 3<sup>rd</sup> prince rushed forward and parried the blow with the fiend-hacking sword crying, "Dad King, please calm your anger!"

The Deity-King turned pale with alarm. *Ah!* When the dad saw the son parrying the scimitar with his own sword, he should have commanded the son to turn back. This is the reason: when this child was born to the Deity-King, <sup>3</sup>he had on his left hand the word Na, and on his right the word Ṭa, and that was why he was named Naṭa. On the third morning after he was born, this prince already decided

to bathe in the ocean and caused a great disaster. He overturned the water-crystal palace and wanted to pull out the tendons of one of the dragons to use them for a belt. When the Deity-King learned of the incident, he feared that his son might prove to be a calamity afterward and sought to have him killed. Naṭa became enraged; knife in hand, he cut off his own flesh to give it back to his mum and carved up his bones to give them back to his dad. After he had, as it were, repaid his dad's sperm and his mum's blood, his soul went to the region of ultimate bliss in the West to complain to God. God at the time was lecturing to the various Nuns when he heard someone on the sacred banners and parasol calling, "Save me!"

1 look with his eyes of wisdom and God knew it was the soul of Naṭa. Using the root of the lotus for bones and its leaves for garment, he recited the magic words of revivification and restored Naṭa to life. With his newfound divine strength, Naṭa succeeded in subduing the fiendish demons of ninety-six caves. His magic powers were so great that he later wanted to kill the Deity-King in order to exact vengeance for self-immolation. The Deity-King had little choice but to plead with Siddhartha who of course was an advocate of peace. He therefore bestowed on the Deity-King a compliant, yellow-gold treasure pagoda of the finest openwork carving and filled with sari-relics; the pagoda in fact symbolised God on each level, and the entire edifice was bathed in luminosity. The sight of the pagoda thus would remind Naṭa of God who was to be revered as the prince's true dad, and that is how the enmity was dissolved. This is the reason also for Li Jing to be named the Deity-King Pagoda-Bearer. Since he was at home today, at leisure, the Deity-King had not been carrying his pagoda, and he thought that Nata had been seized by the desire for vengeance again. That was the reason he paled with fear. Immediately reaching for the gold treasure pagoda on the stand and holding it high, he asked Naṭa, "Son, you've parried my scimitar with your sword. What do you want to say to me?"

Abandoning his sword and respecting, Naṭa replied, "Dad King, you do have a daughter at the Region Below."

"Son," said the Deity-King, "I've had only the four of you. What other daughter do I've?"

"You've quite forgotten, Dad King," said Naṭa. "That other daughter's originally a monster-spirit. Some three centuries ago she became a fiend who stole and devoured the fragrant flowers and treasure candles of Siddhartha at Spirit Mountain. Siddhartha sent us, dad and son to lead an expedition against her. When she's caught, she'd have been beaten to death but Siddhartha gave us this instruction: *for fishes reared in the ponds you never fish; for deer fed in the mountains long life's your wish*. At that time therefore, we spared her life and in gratitude she took you as her dad and your child as her elder brother. She's to set up our tablets down below to which she'd offer perpetual incense fires. Who'd have expected her to become a spirit again and conspire to harm the Tang Monk? When Pilgrim Sun searched through her lair, the tablets were found and charges were thus filed before the throne. This is your daughter by the bond of grace, not a sister of mine by blood."

Astounded by what he heard, the Deity-King said, "My child, I've indeed forgotten the whole matter. What's her name?"

"She's three of them," replied the prince. "At her birthplace she's originally called the Golden-Nosed White-Haired Rodent-Spirit. Because she'd stolen the fragrant flowers and treasure candles, her name's changed to Bisected Guanyin. When she's spared and sent to the Region Below, she changed her name again to Mistress Ground-Rushing."

Only then did the Deity-King realise what had happened. Immediately he wanted to untie Pilgrim with his own hands but Pilgrim had turned rowdy. "Who dares untie me?" he cried. "You can take me in ropes to see the throne! Old monkey will then win his litigation!"

The hands of the Deity-King turned numb with fear, the prince became speechless, and the various subordinate officers retreated shamefacedly. Rolling all over the place in a tantrum, the Great Sage insisted that the Deity-King appear before the throne with him. Having no alternative, the Deity-King could only plead pitifully with the Gold Star to speak on his behalf. The Gold Star said, "As the ancients put the matter, *one'd be lenient in all things*. The way you do things however, is rather hasty! You've bound him and even wanted to kill him. This monkey happens to be notorious in casting blame. Now what do you want me to do? According to what your son's told us, she isn't your daughter by blood but only by bond. Nonetheless, that's still an important tie of kinship. No matter how you dispute the matter, you're somewhat guilty."

The Deity-King said, "If the venerable Star would speak on my behalf, then my guilt will be absolved."

"I'd like indeed to pacify you both," said the Gold Star, "but I don't quite know how to plead for you."

"Why don't you," said the Deity-King, "just mention the former incident, when you went to him on your mission of pacification and gave him his appointment?" The Gold Star did indeed go forward to touch Pilgrim and said, "Great Sage, for my sake let us untie you so that we may all go see the throne."

"Old Minister," said Pilgrim, "you needn't untie me. I know how to roll, and I'll roll my way there!"

"Monkey, you're quite unfeeling!" said the Gold Star, chuckling. "I was, after all, rather kind to you in times past. Now you refuse me even in a trivial matter like this."

"What sort of kindness have you shown me?" asked Pilgrim.

The Gold Star said, "In those years when you're a fiend in Mount Flower-Fruit, when you tamed tigers and subdued dragons, when you abolished the register of death by force, and when you assembled various monsters to perpetrate your delinquency, Heaven above wanted to arrest you. It was this old man who boldly memorialised to the throne to issue a decree of pacification and have you summoned to the Celestial Palace and appointed you a Ban-Horse-Plague. After you had drunk the mortal juice of the Jade Emperor and needed pacification once more, it was this old man's bold memorial also that got you the appointment of Great Sage Equal to Heaven. But you didn't behave and went on to steal peaches, filch juice, and rifle elixir from Lord Lao. Only after this and that did you attain a state of birth-less-ness and deathlessness. But if it hadn't been for me, would you've reached this day?"

Pilgrim said, "The ancients truly had put the matter well: even in death you'd not share a grave with an old man! Like it or not, he knows how to carp! What's so big that I did? I merely disturbed the Celestial Palace as Ban-Horse-Plague. All right! All right! For your sake, Venerable Sir, I'll relent but he himself must untie me." Only then did the Deity-King dare approach and untie the rope. Pilgrim was then invited to tidy his clothes and take the honoured seat, after which the various deities went forward one by one to pay their respects.

Facing the Gold Star, Pilgrim said, "Old Minister, how about it? Didn't I tell you that I'd lose first, and then win? That's how one should do business! Let's urge him to go see the throne quickly, lest my master is harmed."

"Let's not rush things," said the Gold Star. "Having squandered all this time already, let's have a cup of tea first."

"If you drink his tea," said Pilgrim, "you're in fact accepting his bribe. What sort of crime should you be charged with, when you free the felon on a bribe and slight the imperial decree?"

"I'll not drink his tea! I'll not drink his tea!" exclaimed the Gold Star. "Now you're even casting blame on me! Deity-King Li, go quickly! Go quickly!" But the Deity-King, of course, dared not go with Pilgrim to see the Throne, for he was terribly afraid that the ape might turn rowdy once more. If he were to mouth all kinds of accusations before the Jade Emperor, how could the Deity-King hope to refute them? He had no choice but again to plead with the Gold Star to speak up for him.

At length the Gold Star said to Pilgrim, "I've just one word for you! Will you agree to it?"

"I've already overlooked for *your* sake the affront of being bound and hacked by the scimitar," said Pilgrim. "Do you've anything more to say? Speak up! Speak up! If it's good, I'll listen; if not, don't blame me!"

The Gold Star said, "Remember the proverb, 'One day's litigation will take ten days to settle.' You file a charge before the throne, claiming that the monster-spirit is the daughter of the Deity-King, and he denies it. The two of you can argue this matter back and forth before the Jade Emperor. Meanwhile, let me remind you that one day in Heaven is equivalent to one year in the Region Below. For this whole year the monster-spirit has had your master imprisoned in the cave. Let's not mention a wedding ceremony. Even if it's a makeshift affair, by now she must have produced a little monk for him! Hasn't your delay upset the great enterprise?"

Lowering his head, Pilgrim thought to himself, "Yes, indeed! When I left 8 Rules and Sand-monk, I told them that I'd return after a time no longer than it takes tea to boil, or at most for rice to be cooked. I've messed around here all this while. Am I too late?" He said thereby to the Gold Star, "Old Minister, how should we return this imperial decree?"

"Let's ask Deity-King Li to summon his troops to go down with you to subdue the fiend," replied the Gold Star. "I'll return the decree."

"What will you say as your report?" asked Pilgrim.

"That the plaintiff has fled," said the Gold Star, "and that the defendant has been dismissed from the case."

"How nice!" said Pilgrim with a laugh. "For *your* sake I'm dropping my charges, and you claim instead that *I've* fled! Tell him to call up the troops and wait for me outside the South Heaven Gate. I'll go with you to return the decree."

Growing alarmed once more, the Deity-King said, "If he starts talking once he gets inside the palace, I may end up with the crime of treason."

"What sort of person do you take old monkey for?" said Pilgrim. "I, too, am a true man! Once my word is given, horses can't retrieve it.' You think I'd smear you with slander?"

The Deity-King then thanked Pilgrim who left with the Gold Star to return the decree. The Deity-King at once called up the troops under his command and had them stationed outside the South Heaven Gate. Going before the throne with Pilgrim, the Gold Star said to the Jade Emperor, "The person who has imprisoned the Tang Monk happens to be a gold-nosed, white-furred rodent that's become a spirit. She's also the one who's set up the tablets of Deity-King Li and his son. Since learning of this, the Deity-King's already called up his troops for an expedition against the fiend. I beg the Celestial-Honoured One to pardon him."

Since the Jade Emperor had already known of this, he at once extended his Heaven grace and pardon. Pilgrim turned back his cloudy luminosity to go out of the South Heaven Gate where he found the Deity-King, the prince, and the Heaven hosts waiting in smart formation. Behold! Those divine warriors, in churning wind and fog, received the Great Sage and then lowered their clouds to descend to Mount Void-Entrapping. 8 Rules and Sand-monk with bulging eyes, were waiting on the mountain when they saw Pilgrim arriving with the Heaven hosts. Saluting the Deity-King, Idiot said to him, "We've troubled you!"

"Marshal Heaven Reeds," said the Deity-King, "we've something to tell you: we, dad and son, may have enjoyed one stick of her incense but the monster-spirit has thereby grown audacious enough to have your master imprisoned. Please don't blame us for this tardy arrival. Is this Mount Void-Entrapping? I wonder which direction the entrance of her cave faces."

"I'm familiar enough with the way in," said Pilgrim. "Her cave here is named the Bottomless Cave, and its inside is about three hundred miles in circumference. The monster-spirit actually must have many lairs. Previously she had my master detained within a double-eaved towered gate. Now it's so quiet there that you'll not see even the shadow of a ghost! I've no idea where she has moved to."

The Deity-King said, "No matter. *Let her manoeuvre in a thousand ways; she'll never escape the net of Heaven and Earth*. Let's approach the entrance first, and then we'll decide what to do."

All of them immediately proceeded. Ah! After some ten miles they reached the big boulder. Pointing to the entrance about the size of a huge barrel, Pilgrim said, "That's it."

"Without entering the tiger's lair," said the Deity-King, "'how'd one capture the tiger cubs?' Who dares lead the way?"

"I do," said Pilgrim.

"Since I'm to subdue a fiend by imperial decree," said the prince, "I'll lead the way."

At that moment Idiot became even more impetuous. "Old bull will be the one to lead the way!" he shouted.

"No need to make so much noise!" said the Deity-King. "Let me give the order: the Great Sage Sun and the prince will lead the troops down there. We three will stand guard up here at the entrance. We'll coordinate our efforts within and without so that she'll have no route to flee to Heaven and no door to enter Earth. Only then we'll truly show our power."

All of them responded with a resounding "Yes!"

*Look at Pilgrim and the prince!* Leading the captains and troops, they slid inside the cave and immediately mounted the cloudy luminosity. *As they looked about, it's a fine cave indeed!*

*The sun and moon's familiar orbs shine on the same mountains and streams; pearly deeps, jade wells warmed, sheathed in mist, and even many more lovely sights. Red painted towers in layers, scarlet walls and green fields endless. Late autumn lotus and willows of spring – such a cave-heaven's rarely seen.* 4In a moment, they stopped their cloudy luminosity right before the old residence of the monster-spirit. Noisily the celestial warriors began a door-to-door search; they looked everywhere, spreading out through all those 300 miles but neither a single monster-spirit nor a Tripitaka could be seen at all. "This cursed beast," said the warriors, "must've left the cave and removed herself far away."

Little did they know that there was another small cave at the dark southeast corner; there was a tiny door in the cave and a house built rather low, surrounded by a few pots of flowers and several stalks of bamboo. It was a place shrouded in darkness and faint fragrance. Here the old fiend had brought Tripitaka and wanted to force him to marry her, thinking that Pilgrim would never be able to find them. She did not realise, of course, that her fate was about to overtake her. As those little fiends crowded together inside one of the more courageous ones stuck out his head to take a peek outside, and he ran directly into the celestial warriors. "They're here!" they cried and Pilgrim became so aroused that he went crashing in, his hand gripping the golden-hooped rod. The whole nest of monster-spirits was packed in that small and narrow place. When the prince and his troops surged forward, *where'd any of the fiends run to hide?* Pilgrim soon located the Tang Monk, the luggage, and the dragon-horse. When the old fiend realised that there was no way for her to flee, she faced Prince Naṭa and respected repeatedly, begging for her life. The prince said, "Our expedition here to arrest you is decreed by the Jade Emperor and it's no small thing. We, dad and son nearly brought on ourselves colossal calamity by enjoying one stick of your incense!" Thereupon he bellowed: "Celestial soldiers, take out the fiend-binding ropes and tie up all those monster-spirits!"

The old fiend could not avoid a little suffering. The company then turned around their cloudy luminosity and went outside the cave with Pilgrim chortling loudly all the way. The Deity-King left his post at the entrance to meet Pilgrim saying, "This time you've seen your master!"

"Thank you! Thank you!" replied Pilgrim.

He at once led Tripitaka to salute to thank the Deity-King and the prince. Sand-monk and 8 Rules would have liked very much to hack the old spirit into tiny pieces but the Deity-King said, "Since she's arrested by imperial decree, she'd not be easily disposed of. We've yet to return to make a report to the throne." So the Deity-King and the third prince led the divine warriors and celestial soldiers to guard the monster-spirit and take her back to face judgement before Heaven's tribunal. Meanwhile Pilgrim and Sand-monk scurried around the Tang Monk to pack as 8 Rules steadied the horse for him to mount. They headed for the main road together. Thus it is that *the silk threads are sundered to dry the golden sea; the jade lock's broken and he leaves the birdcage.*

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**Priests<sup>1</sup> are hard to destroy completes great awakening; the Religion-king attains the right, his body's naturalised**

Tripitaka Tang had safeguarded his primal yang and escaped the bitter ordeal of the fair gender. As he followed Pilgrim to head for the West, it was soon again the time of summer, when warm breezes freshly stirred, and rain of the plum season drizzled down in fine strands. Marvellous scenery, it is: *lush and dense is the green shade; in light breeze young swallows parade. New lilies unfold on the ponds; old bamboos spread slowly their fronds. The sky joins the meadows in green; mountain blooms over the ground are seen. Sword-like, rushes stand by the brook; pomegranates redden this sketchbook.* Master and disciples, the 4 of them had to endure the heat, of course. As they proceeded, they came upon 2 rows of tall willows flanking the road; from within the willow shade an old woman suddenly walked out, leading a young child by the hand. "Priest," she cried aloud to the Tang Monk, "you must stop right now! Turn your horse around and return to the East quickly! The road to the West leads only to death!"

So startled was Tripitaka that he leaped down from the horse and saluted to her saying, "Old Nun as the ancients have said: *the ocean's wide so fishes may leap; the sky's empty so birds may fly.* How'd it be that a road to the West's lacking?"

Pointing westward with her finger, the old woman said, "About five or six miles from here's the Religion-Destroying Kingdom. In some previous disciple somewhere the king must have contracted evil karma so that in this life he sins without cause. Two years ago he made a stupendous vow that he would kill ten thousand Religious priests. Until now he has succeeded in slaughtering nine thousand, nine hundred, and ninety-six nameless monks. All he is waiting for now are four more monks, preferably with names, and the perfect score of ten thousand will be reached. If you people arrive at his city, you'll all become life-giving king Nuns!"

Terror-stricken by these words, Tripitaka said, trembling all over, "Old Nun, I'm profoundly grateful for your kindness, and I can't thank you enough. May I ask whether there is another road that conveniently bypasses the city? This poor monk will gladly take such a road and proceed."

With a giggle, the old woman replied, "You can't bypass the city! You simply can't! You might do so only if you'd fly!"

At once 8 Rules began to wag his tongue and said, "Mama, don't speak such scary words! We're all able to fly!" With his fiery eyes and diamond pupils however, Pilgrim was the only one who could discern the truth: the old woman and the child were actually the Nun Guanyin and the Boy Skilled in Wealth. So alarmed was he that he went to his knees immediately and cried, "Nun, pardon your disciples for failing to meet you!"

Gently the Nun rose on a petal of pink cloud, so astounding the elder Tang that he did not quite know where to stand. All he could do was to fall on his knees to respect, and 8 Rules and Sand-monk too went hurriedly to their knees to salute the sky. In a moment, the auspicious cloud drifted away to return to South Sea. Pilgrim got up and raised his master, saying, "Please rise, the Nun has returned to her treasure mountain."

As he got up, Tripitaka said, "Wukong, if you had recognised the Nun, why didn't you tell us sooner?"

"You'd not stop asking questions," replied Pilgrim, laughing, "whereas I immediately went to my knees. Wasn't that soon enough?" 8 Rules and Sand-monk then said to Pilgrim, "Thanks to the Nun's revelation, what lies before us has to be the Religion-Destroying Kingdom. What are we all going to do when there's this determination to kill monks?"

"Idiot, don't be afraid!" said Pilgrim. "We've met quite a few vicious demons and savage fiends, and we've gone through tiger lairs and dragon lagoons but we've never been hurt. What we've to face here is a kingdom of common people. Why should we fear them? Our only trouble right now is that this is no place to stay. Besides, it's getting late, and if any villagers returning from business in the city catch sight of us priests and begin to spread the news, that'll not be very convenient. Let's lead Master away from the main road and find a more secluded spot. We can then make further plans." Tripitaka indeed followed his suggestion; all of them left the main road and went over to a small ditch, in which they sat down. "Brothers," said Pilgrim, "the two of you stay here and guard Master. Let old monkey go in transformation to look over the city. Perhaps I can find a road that's out of the way that will take us through the region this very night."

"O Disciple!" urged the Tang Monk. "Don't take this lightly, for you're going against the law of a king. Do be careful!"

"Relax! Relax!" replied Pilgrim with a smile. "Old monkey will manage!" *Dear Great Sage!* When he finished speaking, he leaped into the air with a loud whistle. *How fantastic! Neither pulled from above by strings, nor supported below by cranes, like us all, 2 parents he owns but only he has lighter bones.* Standing at the edge of the clouds, he peered below and saw that the city was flooded by airs of gladness and auspicious luminosity. "What a lovely place!" Pilgrim said. "Why does it want to destroy the religion?" As he stared at the place, it gradually grew dark. He saw that *at letter-10 crossings<sup>2</sup> lamps flared brightly; at 9-tiered halls incense rose and bells tolled. In 8 quarters travellers dropped their gear. 7 glowing stars lit up the blue sky; from the 6-corps camps the painted bugles just faintly sounded; in the 5-watch tower, by drop the copper pot began dripping. On 4 sides night fog thickened; at 3 marts chilly mist spread out. Spouses in 2s entered the silken drapes when 1 bright moon ascended the east.* He thought to himself: "I'd like to go down to the business districts to look over the roadways but with a face like mine, people will undoubtedly holler that I'm a priest if they see me. I'll transform myself." Making the magic sign and reciting a spell, he changed with 1 shake of his body into a moth: *a small shape with light, agile wings, he dives to snuff candles and lamps. By metamorphosis he gains his true form, most active midst rotted grasses. He strikes flames for love of hot light, flying, circling without ceasing. Purple-robed, fragrant-winged, chasing the fireflies, he likes most the deep windless night.* <sup>3</sup>See him soaring and turning as he flew toward those six boulevards and three marts, passing eaves and rafters. As he proceeded, he suddenly caught sight of a row of houses at the corner of the street ahead, each house having a lantern hung above its door. "These families," he thought to himself, "must be celebrating the annual Lantern Feast. Why'd they've lighted lanterns by the row?" Stiffening his wings, he flew near and looked carefully. The house in the very middle had a square lantern, on which these words were written: Rest for the Travelling Merchant. Below there were also the words: Steward Wang's Inn. Pilgrim knew therefore that it was a hotel. When he stretched out his neck to look further, he saw that there were some 8 or 9 people who had all finished their dinner. Having loosened their clothes, taken off their head wraps, and washed their hands and feet, they had taken to their beds to sleep. Secretly pleased, Pilgrim said, "Master may pass through after all!"

He knew because he was about to follow a wicked scheme: waiting until those people were asleep, he would steal their clothes and wraps so that master and disciples could disguise themselves as secular folks to enter the city. Alas! There had to be this disagreeable development! As he was deliberating by himself, the steward went forward and gave this instruction to his guests: "Sirs, do be careful, for our place caters to both gentlemen and rogues. I'd like to ask each of you to take care of your clothing and luggage." *Think of it! People doing business abroad, wouldn't they be careful with everything?*

When they heard such instruction from the innkeeper, they became more cautious than ever. Hastening to their feet, they said, "The proprietor's quite right. Those of us fatigued by travel may not easily wake up once we're asleep. If we lose our things, what're we going to do? Please take our clothes, head wraps, and moneybags inside. When we get up in the morning, you may return them to us."

Steward Wang accordingly took all of their clothes and belongings into his own residence. By nature impulsive, Pilgrim at once spread his wings to fly there also and alighted on one of the head-wrap stands. Then he saw Steward Wang going to the front door to take down the lantern, lower the cloth curtain, and close the door and windows. Only then did Wang return to his room to take off his own clothes and lie down. The steward however, also had a wife sleeping with two children, and they were still making so much noise that none of them could go to sleep right away. The wife, too, was patching some garment and refused to retire. "If I wait until this woman sleeps," thought Pilgrim to himself, "won't Master be delayed?"

Fearing also that the city gates might be closed later in the night, he could no longer refrain from flying down there and threw himself on the taper. Truly *he risked his life to dive into flames; scorched his brow to tempt his fate.* The taper immediately went out. With one shake of his body he changed again into a rat. After a squeak or two he leaped down, took the garments and head wraps, and began to drag them out. Panic-stricken, the woman said, "Old man, things are bad! A rat has turned into a spirit!"

On hearing this, Pilgrim flaunted his abilities some more. Stopping at the door, he cried out in a loud voice, "Steward Wang, don't listen to the babblings of your woman. I'm no rodent-spirit. Since a man of light does not engage in shady dealings, I must tell you that I'm the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who has descended to earth to accompany the Tang Monk on his way to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. Because your king is without principles, I've come especially to borrow these caps and gowns to adorn my master. Once we've passed through the city, I'll return them."

Hearing that, Steward Wang scrambled up at once. It was, of course, pitch black, and he was in a hurry besides. He grabbed his pants, thinking he had his shirt; but no matter how hard he tried, slipping them on this way and that, he could not put them on. Using his magic of abduction, the Great Sage had already mounted the clouds to leave the city and return to the ditch by the road. In the bright light of the stars and moon, Tripitaka was standing there staring when he saw Pilgrim approaching. "Disciple," he asked, "can we go through the Religion-Destroying Kingdom?"

Walking forward and putting down the garments, Pilgrim said, "Master, if you want to go through the Religion-Destroying Kingdom, you can't remain a priest."

"Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "whom are you trying to fool? It's easy not to remain a priest: just don't shave your head for half a year, and you hair will grow."

"We can't wait for half a year!" said Pilgrim. "We must become laymen right now!"

Horried, Idiot said, "The way you talk is most unreasonable, as always! We're all priests, and you want us to become laymen this instant! How could we even wear a head wrap? Even if we tighten the edges, we've nothing on our heads to tie the strings with!"

"Stop the wisecracks!" snapped Tripitaka. "Let's do what's proper! Wukong, what's your plan?"

"Master," said Pilgrim, "I've inspected the city here. Though the king's unprincipled enough to slaughter monks, he is nevertheless a genuine son of Heaven, for his city is filled with joyful and auspicious air. I can recognise the streets in the city and can converse in the local dialect. A moment ago I borrowed several garments and head wraps from a hotel. We must disguise ourselves as laymen and enter the city to ask for lodging. At the fourth watch we'd rise and ask the innkeeper to prepare us a meal – vegetarian, of course. By about the hour of the fifth watch, we'll walk close to the wall of the city-gate and find the main road to the West. If we run into anyone who tries to detain us, we can still give the explanation that we've been commissioned by the court of a superior state. The Religion-Destroying King would not dare hinder us. He'll let us go." Sand-monk said, "Elder Brother's plan is most proper. Let's do as he tells us."

Indeed, the elder had little choice but to shed his monk's robe and his clerical cap and to put on the garment and head wrap of a layman. Sand-monk too changed his clothes. 8 Rules however, had such a huge head that he could not wear the wrap as it was. Pilgrim had to rip open two wraps and sew them together with needle and thread to make one wrap and drape it over his head. A larger garment was selected for him to put on after which Pilgrim himself also changed into a different set of clothing. "Once we get moving," he said, "you all must put away the words *master and disciples.*"

"Without these terms," said 8 Rules, "how'll we address ourselves?"

Pilgrim said, "We'd do so as if we're in a fraternal order: Master Sand will be called Grand Master Tang, you'll be Third Master Bullseye, Sand-monk shall be called Fourth Master Sand and I'll be called Second Master Sun. When we reach the hotel however, none of you'd talk; let me do all the talking. If they ask us what sort of business we're in, I'll say that we're horse traders, using this white horse of ours as a sample. I'll tell them that there are altogether ten of us in this fraternal order but the four of us have come first to rent a room in the hotel and sell our horse. The innkeeper will certainly take care of us. If we receive his hospitality, I'll pick up by the time we leave some bits or pieces of broken tiles and change them into silver to thank him. Then we'll get on with our journey." The elder had no alternative but to comply reluctantly.

The four of them, leading the horse and toting the luggage, hurried into the city. It was fortunate that this happened to be a peaceful region, so that the city gates had not yet been closed even as the time of the night watch began. When they reached the door of the Steward Wang's Hotel, they heard noises from inside, crying, "I've lost my head wrap!" Another person cried, "I've lost my clothes." Feigning ignorance, Pilgrim led them to another hotel, cater-corner from this one. Since that hotel had not yet even taken down its lantern, Pilgrim walked up to the door and called out: "Innkeeper, do you've a room for us to stay in?"

Some woman inside replied at once, "Yes! Yes! Yes! Let the masters go up to the second floor." She had hardly finished speaking when a man arrived to take the horse that Pilgrim handed over to him. He himself led his master behind the lamplight and up to the door of the second floor where lounge tables and chairs had been placed. He pushed open the shutters, and moonlight streamed in as they took their seats. Someone came up with lighted lamps but Pilgrim barred the door and blew out the lamps with one breath. "We don't need lamps when the moon's so bright," he said.

After the person with the lamps had been sent away, another maid brought up four bowls of pure tea that Pilgrim accepted. From below, a woman about fifty-seven or fifty-eight years old came straight up to the second floor. Standing to one side, she asked, "Gentlemen where have you come from? What treasure merchandise do you've?"

"We came from the north," replied Pilgrim, "and we've a few ordinary horses to sell."

"Well," said the woman, "we've not seen many guests who sell horses."

"This one is Grand Master Tang," said Pilgrim, "this one is Third Master Bullseye, and this one is Fourth Master Sand. Your humble student here is Second Master Sun."

"All different surnames," said the woman with a giggle.



"Indeed, all different surnames but living together," said Pilgrim. "There are altogether ten of us in our fraternal order; we four have come first to seek lodging at your hotel, and the six others are resting outside the city. With a herd of horses, they don't dare enter the city at such an hour. When we've located the proper place for them to stay, they'll come in tomorrow morning. Once we've sold the horses, we'll leave."

"How many horses are there in your herd?" asked the woman.

"Big and small, there are over a hundred," said Pilgrim, "all very much like the horse we've here. Only their colours vary."

Giggling some more, the woman said, "Second Master Sun is indeed a merchant in every way! It's a good thing that you've come to our place, for any other household would not dare receive you. We happen to have a large courtyard here, complete with stalls and stocked with feed. Even if you had several hundred horses, we can take care of them. You'd be aware, too, that our hotel has been here for years and has gained quite a reputation. My late husband who unfortunately died long ago, had the surname of Zhao, and that's why this hotel is named Widow Zhao's Inn. We've three classes of accommodation here. If you'll kindly allow impoliteness to precede courtesy, I'll discuss the room rates with you, so I'll know what to charge you."

"What you say is quite right," said Pilgrim. "What three classes of accommodation do you've in your hotel? As the saying goes, *high, medium, and low are three prices of goods, guests, far and near aren't treated the same*. Tell me a little of your three classes of accommodation."

Widow Zhao said, "What we've here are the superior, moderate, and inferior classes of accommodation. For the superior, we'll prepare a banquet of five kinds of fruits and five courses, topped by lion-head puddings and peck-candies. There will be two persons per table, and young hostesses will be invited to drink and rest with you. The charge per person is five coins of silver, and this includes the room."

"What a bargain!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Where I came from, five coins of silver won't even pay for the young ladies!"

"For the moderate," said the widow again, "all of you'll share one table, and you'll get only fruits and hot juice. You yourselves may establish your drinking rules and play your finger-guessing games but no young hostesses will be present. For this, we charge two coins of silver per person."

"That's even more of a bargain," said Pilgrim. "What's the inferior class like?"

"I dare not describe that in front of honoured guests," replied the woman.

"You may tell us," said Pilgrim. "We'll find our bargain and do our thing."

The woman said, "In the inferior class there's no one to serve you. You may eat whatever rice there is in the pot, and when you've had your fill, you can get some straw and make yourself a bed on the ground. Find yourself a place to sleep, and in the morning you may give us a few pennies for the rice. We'll not haggle with you."

On hearing this, 8 Rules said, "Lucky! Lucky! That's Old bull's kind of bargain! Let me stand in front of the pot and stuff myself with rice. Then I'll have a nice damn snooze in front of the hearth!"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "what are you saying? You and I, after all, have managed to earn a few ounces of silver here and there in the world, haven't we? Give us the superior class!"

Filled with delight, the woman cried, "Bring some fine tea! Tell the chefs to start their preparations." She dashed downstairs and shouted some more: "Slaughter some chickens and geese. Have them cooked or cured to go with the rice. Slaughter a bull and a lamb too; even if we can't use them today, we may use them tomorrow. Get the good juice. Cook white-grain rice and take bleached flour to make biscuits."

When he heard her from upstairs, Tripitaka said, "Second Master Sun, what shall we do? She is planning to slaughter chickens, geese, a bull, and a lamb. When she brings these things up that one of us, keepers of a perpetual vegetarian diet that we're, dare take one bite?"

"I know what to do," replied Pilgrim, and he went to the head of the stairs and tapped the floor with his foot. "Mama Zhao, please come up here," he said. The mama came up and said, "What instructions do you've for me, Second Master?"

"Don't slaughter anything today," said Pilgrim, "for we're keeping a vegetarian diet."

Astonished, the widow asked, "Do the masters keep a perpetual diet or a monthly diet?"

"Neither," replied Pilgrim, "for ours is named the *gengshen* diet. Since the cyclical combination for today is in fact *gengshen*, we must keep the diet. Once the hour of the third watch is past, it will be the day of *xinyou*, and we'll be able to eat meat. You may do the slaughtering tomorrow. Please go now and prepare us some vegetarian dishes. We'll pay you the price of the superior class just the same."

The woman was more delighted than ever. She dashed downstairs to say, "Don't slaughter anything! Don't slaughter anything! Take some wood ears, Fujian bamboo-shoots, bean curds, wheat glutens, and pull some greens from our garden to make vermicelli soup. Let the dough rise so that we can steam some rolls. We can cook the white-grain rice and brew fragrant tea also." Aha! Those chefs in the kitchen, accustomed to do this every day, finished their preparations in no time at all. The food was brought upstairs, along with ready-made lion-puddings and candied fruits, so that the four could enjoy themselves to their hearts' content.

"Do you take dietary juice?" the woman asked again.

Pilgrim said, "Only Grand Master Tang doesn't drink but the rest of us can use a few cups." The widow then brought up a bottle of hot juice. Hardly had the three of them finished pouring when they heard loud hangings on the floor down below. "Mama," said Pilgrim, "did something fall downstairs?"

"No," replied the widow. "A few hired hands from our humble village who arrived rather late tonight with their monthly payment of rice were told to sleep downstairs. Since you masters have come and we've not enough help right now, I've asked them to take the carriages to go fetch the young hostesses here to keep you company. The poles on the carriages must have accidentally backed into the boards of the staircase."

"It's a good thing that you mention this," said Pilgrim. "Quickly tell them not to go. For one thing we're still keeping the diet, and for another our brothers have not yet arrived. Wait till they come in tomorrow, then we'll invite some call girls for the whole order to have some fun right here. After we've sold our horses, we'll leave."

"Good man! Good man!" said the widow. "You've not destroyed the peace but you've saved your own energy at the same time!" she called out, "Bring back the carriages. No need to fetch the girls."

After the four had finished the juice and rice, the utensils were taken away, and the attendants left. Tripitaka whispered behind Pilgrim's ear, "Where'll we sleep?"

"Up here," replied Pilgrim. "It's not quite safe," said Tripitaka. "All of us are rather tired. When we're asleep, if someone from this household chances to come by to fix things up and notices our bald heads if our caps roll off, they will see that we're monks. What shall we do if they begin yelling?"

"Indeed!" replied Pilgrim. He went again to the head of the stairs to tap his foot, and the widow came up once more to ask, "What does Master Sun want?"

"Where shall we sleep?" asked Pilgrim.

"Why, up here, of course!" said the woman. "There're no mosquitoes. You may open wide the windows, and with a nice southerly breeze, it's perfect for you to sleep."

"No, we can't," said Pilgrim. "Our Third Master Bulseye here's somewhat allergic to dampness and Fourth Master Sand's arthritic shoulders. Big Brother Tang can only sleep in the dark and I'm, too rather sensitive to light. This is no place to sleep." The mama walked downstairs and, leaning on the counter, began to sigh. A daughter of hers, carrying a child, approached and said, "Mum as the proverb says, *for ten days you sit on the shore; in one day you may pass nine beaches*. Since this is the hot season, we've not much business but by the time of the fall business may increase so much that we can't even cope with it. Why are you sighing?"

"Child," replied the woman, "I'm not worrying about lack of business, for at dusk today I was ready to close shop. But at the hour when the night watch began, four horse traders came to rent a room. Since they wanted the superior-class accommodation, I was hoping to make a few pennies' profit from them. But they keep a vegetarian diet, and that completely dashes my hopes. That's why I'm sighing."

Her daughter said, "If they have eaten our rice, they can't leave and go to another household. Tomorrow we can prepare meat and juice for them. Why can't we make our profit then?"

"But they are all sick," said the woman again, "afraid of draft, sensitive to light; they all want to sleep in a dark place. Come to think of it, all the buildings in our household are covered by single-tiered transparent tiles. Where are we going to find a dark enough place for them? I think we'd better consider donating the meal to them and ask them to go someplace else."

"Mum," said her daughter, "there's a dark place in my building, and it has no draft. It's perfect!"

"Where is that?" asked the woman. The daughter said, "When dad was alive, he made a huge wardrobe trunk about four feet wide, seven feet long, and at least three feet deep. Six or seven people can probably sleep in it. Tell them to go inside the wardrobe and sleep there."

"I wonder if it's acceptable," said the woman. "Let me ask them. Hey, Master Sun, our humble dwelling is terribly small, and there is no dark place. We've only a huge wardrobe trunk which neither wind nor light can get through. How about sleeping in that?"

"Fine! Fine! Fine!" replied Pilgrim. Several of the hired hands were asked at once to haul out the wardrobe and remove the door before they were told to go downstairs. With Pilgrim leading his master and Sand-monk picking up the pole of luggage, they walked behind the lamplight to the wardrobe. Without regard for good or ill, 8 Rules immediately crawled in. After handing him the luggage, Sand-monk helped the Tang Monk in before entering himself.

"Where's our horse?" asked Pilgrim. One of the attendants on the side replied, "It's tethered at the rear of the house and feeding."

"Bring it, along with the feed," said Pilgrim, "and tether it tightly beside the wardrobe." Only then did he himself enter the wardrobe. He cried, "Mama Zhao, put on the door, stick in the bolt and lock it up. Then take a look for us and see whether there are any holes anywhere that light may get through. Paste them up with paper. Tomorrow, come early and open the wardrobe."

"You're much too careful!" said the widow.

Thereafter everyone left to close the doors and sleep. The 4 of them inside the wardrobe. How pitiful! For one thing, it was the first time they had ever worn head wraps; for another, the weather was hot. Moreover, it was very stuffy because no breeze could get in. They all took off their wraps and their clothes but without fans they could only wave their monk caps a little. Crowding and leaning on one another, they all began to doze by about the hour of the second watch. Pilgrim however, was determined to be mischievous! As he was the only one who could not sleep, he stretched out his hand and gave 8 Rules' leg a pinch. Pulling back his leg, Idiot mumbled, "Go to sleep! Look how miserable we're! And you still find it interesting to pinch people's arms and legs for fun?"

As a lark, Pilgrim began to say, "We'd originally five thousand taels of silver. We sold some horses previously for three thousand taels and right now, there're still four thousand taels left in the money bags. We can also sell our present herd of horses for three thousand taels and will have both capital and profit. That's enough! That's enough!"

8 Rules of course was a man intent on sleeping and he refused to answer him. Little did they know that the waiters, the water haulers, and the fire tenders of this hotel had always been part of a band of thieves. When they heard Pilgrim speaking of so much silver, some of them slipped out at once and called up some twenty other thieves who arrived with torches and staffs to rob the horse traders.

As they rushed in, Widow Zhao and her daughter were so terrified that they slammed shut the door of their own building and let the thieves do what they pleased. Those bandits did not want anything from the hotel; all they desired was to find the guests. When they saw no trace of them upstairs, they searched everywhere with torches and came upon the huge wardrobe in the courtyard. To one of the legs a white horse was tethered. The wardrobe was tightly locked, and they could not pry open the door.

The thieves said, "Worldly people like us have to be observant! If this wardrobe is so heavy, there must be luggage and riches locked inside. What if we steal the horse, haul the wardrobe outside the city, break it up, and divide the contents among ourselves – wouldn't that be nice?" Indeed, those thieves did find some ropes and poles with which they proceeded to haul the wardrobe out of the hotel.

As they walked, the load swayed from side to side.

Waking up with a start, 8 Rules said, "O Elder Brother, please go to sleep! Why are you shaking us?"

"Don't talk!" said Pilgrim. "No one's shaking you." Tripitaka and Sand-monk also woke up and cried, "Who is carrying us?"

"Don't shout! Don't shout!" said Pilgrim. "Let them carry us. If they haul us all the way to the Western Heaven, it'll save us some walking!"

When those thieves succeeded in getting away from the hotel, they did not head for the West; instead, they hauled the chest toward the east of the city where they broke out after killing some of the guards at the city gate. That disturbance, of course, alerted people in the six boulevards and three marts, the firemen and guards living in various stations. The reports went quickly to the Regional Patrol Commander and the East City Warden's office. Since this was an affair for which they had to assume responsibility, the commander and the warden at once summoned the cavalry and archers to pursue the thieves out of the city. When the thieves saw how strong the government troops were, they dared not contend with them. Putting down the huge wardrobe and abandoning the white horse, they fled in every direction. The government troops did not manage even to catch half a thief but they did take the wardrobe and caught the horse, and they returned in triumph. As he looked at the horse beneath the lights, the commander saw that it was a fine creature indeed: *its mane parts like silver threads; tail dangles as strips of jade. Why mention the Eight Noble Dragon Steeds? <sup>4</sup>This 1 surpasses Suxiang's<sup>5</sup> slow trotting. Its bones would fetch a thousand gold, this wind-chaser through 10000 miles. He climbs mountains oft to join the green clouds, neighs at the moon, and fuses with white snow. Truly a dragon that has left the isles, a jade unicorn that man loves to own!* The commander, instead of riding his own horse, mounted this white horse to lead his troops back into the city. The wardrobe was hauled into his official residence where it was then sealed with an official tape issued jointly by him and the warden. Soldiers were to guard it until dawn, when they could memorialise to the king to see about its disposal. As the other troops retired. The elder Tang inside the wardrobe complained to Pilgrim saying, "You ape-head! You've just about put me to death! If we'd stayed

outside, been caught, and sent before the king of the Religion-Destroying Kingdom, we'd still argue with him. Now we're locked up in a wardrobe abducted by thieves and then recovered by government troops. When we see the king tomorrow, we'll be readymade victims for him to complete his number of ten thousand!"

Pilgrim said, "There're people outside right now! If they open the wardrobe and take us out, we'll either be bound or hanged! Do try to be more patient so that we don't have to face the ropes. When we see that befuddled king tomorrow, old monkey's his own way of answering him. I promise you that you'll not be harmed one whit. Now relax and sleep." By about the hour of the third watch, Pilgrim exercised his ability and eased his rod out. Blowing his mortal breath on it, he cried, "Change!" and it changed into a 3-pointed drill. He drilled along the bottom edge of the wardrobe two or three times and made a small hole. Retrieving the drill, he changed with one shake of his body into an ant and crawled out. Then he changed back into his original form to soar on the clouds into the royal palace. The king at that moment was sleeping soundly. Using the Grand Magic of Body-Division in the Assembly of Gods, Pilgrim ripped off all the hairs on his left arm. He blew his mortal breath on them, crying, "Change!" They all changed into tiny Pilgrims. From his right arm he pulled off all the hairs, too, and blew his mortal breath on them, crying, "Change!" They changed into sleep-inducing insects. Then he recited another magic spell that began with the letter Ohm to summon the local spirits of the region into his presence. They were told to lead the small Pilgrims so that they could scatter throughout the royal palace, the 5 Military Commissions, the 6 Ministries, and the residences of officials high and low. Anyone with rank and appointment would be given a sleep-inducing insect, so that he would sleep soundly without even turning over. Pilgrim also took up his golden-hooped rod; with a squeeze and a wave, he cried, "Treasure, change!"

It changed at once into hundreds and thousands of razor blades. He took 1 of them. He told the tiny Pilgrims each to take 1 so that they could go into the palace, the commissions, and the ministries to shave heads. Ah! This is how it was: *Religion-king would the boundless dhartna destroy that fills the world and reaches the great Way. All religion-causes are of substance 1; Triyana's wondrous forms are all the same. The jade cupboard's drilled through, the truth is known; gold hairs are scattered and blindness is removed. Religion-king will surely the right fruit attain: birth-less and deathless, in the void he'll remain.* The shaving activities that went on for half the night were completely successful. Thereafter Pilgrim recited his spell to dismiss the local spirits. With one shake of his body he retrieved the hairs of both his arms. The razor blades he squeezed back into their true and original form – one golden-hooped rod – which he then reduced in size to store in his ear once more. He next assumed the form of an ant to crawl back into the wardrobe before changing into his original appearance to accompany the Tang Monk in his confinement. The palace maidens and harem girls in the inner chambers of the royal palace rose before dawn to wash and do their hair. Every one of them had lost her hair. The hair of all the palace eunuchs, young and old, had also vanished. They crowded outside the palatial bedchambers to start the poems for waking the royal couple, all fighting hard to hold back their tears and not daring to report their mishap. In a little while, the queen of the three palaces awoke, and she too found that her hair was gone. Hurriedly she moved a lamp to glance at the dragon bed: there in the midst of the silk coverlets a monk was sleeping! Unable to contain herself, the queen began to speak and her words awoke the king. When the king opened his eyes, all he saw was the bald head of the queen. Sitting bolt upright, he said, "My queen, why do you look like this?"

"But my lord's also like this!" replied the queen.

1 touch of his own head sent the king into sheer panic, crying, "What's become of us?"

In that moment of desperation, the consorts of 6 halls, the palace maidens, the eunuchs young, and old all entered with bald heads. They knelt down and said, "Our lord, we've all become Religious priests!"

When the king saw them, tears fell from his eyes. "It must be the result of our slaughtering the monks," he said. Whereupon he gave this decree: "You're forbidden, all of you to mention your loss of hair for we fear that the civil and military officials would criticise the unrighteousness of the state. Let's prepare to hold court at the main hall." All those officials high and low in the 5 Commissions and 6 Ministries who were about to have an audience with the throne at dawn. As each 1 of them had also lost his hair during the night, they were all busily preparing memorials to report the incident. Thus one could hear that *3 times the whip struck as they faced the king: the cause of their shorn hair they would make known.*

## 101

### Mind Monkey envies Wood Mum; the demon lord plots to devour Chan

The morning court of the king during which many civil and military officials presented their memorials saying, "Our Lord, please pardon your subjects for being remiss in their manners."

"Our worthy ministers have not departed from their customary good deportment," replied the king. "What is remiss in your manners?"

"O Our Lord!" said the various ministers; "we don't know the reason but during the night all your subjects lost their hair." Clutching those memorials that complained of loss of hair, the king descended from his dragon couch to say to his subjects, "Indeed we don't know the reason either but we and the other members of the royal palace, high and low, also lost all our hair." As tears gushed from their eyes, ruler and subjects said to one another, "From now on, we'd not dare slaughter monks!"

Then the king ascended his dragon couch once more as the officials returned to standing in ranks. The king said, "Let those who have any business leave their ranks to present their memorials; if there is no further business, let the screen be rolled up so that the court may retire." From the ranks of military officials the city patrol commander stepped out, and from the ranks of the civil officials the east city warden walked forward. Both came up to the steps to respect and say, "By your sage decree your subjects were on patrol last night, and we succeeded in recovering the stolen goods of one cupboard and one white horse. Your lowly subjects dare not dispose of these by our own authority, and we beg you to render a decision." Highly pleased, the king said, "Bring us both horse and cupboard."

As soon as the two officials went back to their offices, they immediately summoned their troops to haul out the cupboard. Locked inside, Tripitaka became so terrified that his soul was about to leave his body. "Disciples," he said, "what do we say once we appear before the king?"

Laughing, Pilgrim said, "Stop fussing! I've made the proper arrangements! When they open the cupboard, they'll salute us as their teachers. Just tell 8 Rules not to wrangle over seniority!"

"To be spared from execution," said 8 Rules, "is already boundless blessing! You think I dare wrangle?" Hardly had they finished talking when the cupboard was hauled to the court; the soldiers carried it inside the Five-Phoenix Tower and placed it before the vermilion steps.

When the subjects asked the king to inspect the cupboard, he immediately commanded that it be opened. The moment the cover was lifted however, Bullseye 8 Rules could not refrain from leaping out, so terrifying the various officials that they were all struck dumb. Then they saw the Tang Monk emerging, supported by Pilgrim Sun while Sand-monk brought out the luggage. When 8 Rules caught sight of the commander holding the horse, he rushed forward and bellowed, "The horse is ours! Give it to me!" The commander was so scared that he fell backward head over heels.

As the four of them stood on the steps, the king noticed that they were all Religious priests. Hurrying down from his dragon couch, the king asked all his consorts of the three palaces to join his subjects in descending from the Treasure Hall of Golden Chimes and saluting with him to the clerics. "Where did the elders come from?" the king asked.

Tripitaka said, "We're those sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go to India's Great Thunderclap Monastery in the West to seek true scriptures from the living God."

"If the Venerable Master had come from such a great distance," said the king, "for what reason did you choose to rest in a cupboard?"

"Your humble cleric," replied Tripitaka, "had learned of Your Majesty's vow to slaughter monks. We therefore dared not approach your superior state openly. Disguising ourselves as laymen, we came by night to an inn in your treasure region to ask for lodging. As we're afraid that people might still recognise our true identity, we chose to sleep in the cupboard that unfortunately was stolen by thieves. It was then recovered by the commander and brought here. Now that I'm privileged to behold the dragon countenance of Your Majesty, I feel as if I'd caught sight of the sun after the clouds had parted. I beg Your Majesty to extend your grace and favour wide as the sea to pardon and release this humble cleric."

"The Venerable Master is a noble priest from the heavenly court of a superior state," replied the king, "and it is we who have been remiss in our welcome. The reason for our vow to slaughter monks stems from the fact that we're slandered by certain priests in years past. We therefore vowed to Heaven to kill ten thousand-monks as a figure of perfection. Little did we anticipate that we'd be forced to become monks instead, for all of us – ruler and subjects, king and consorts – now have had our hair shorn off. We, in turn, beg the Venerable Master not to be sparing in your great virtue and accept us as your disciples."

When 8 Rules heard these words, he roared with laughter, saying, "If you want to be our disciples, what sort of presentation gifts do you've for us?"

"If the Master is willing," said the king, "we'd be prepared to offer you the treasures and wealth of the state."

"Don't mention treasures and wealth," said Pilgrim, "for we're the sort of monks who keep to our principles. Only certify our travel rescript and escort us out of the city. We promise you that your kingdom will be secure forever, and you'll be endowed with blessings and long life in abundance."

When the king heard that, he at once ordered the Court of Imperial Entertainments to prepare a huge banquet. Ruler and subjects, meanwhile, saluted themselves to return to the One. The travel rescript was certified immediately, and then the king requested the masters to change the name of his kingdom. "Your Majesty," said Pilgrim, "the name of Religion Kingdom is an excellent one; it's only the word 'Destroying' that's inadequate. Since we've passed through this region, you may change its name to Religion-Honouring Kingdom. I promise that you'll *prosper* a millennium *in calm rivers and seas with rain and wind in season and in all quarters peace.*"

After thanking Pilgrim, the king asked for the imperial cortege and the entire court to escort master and disciples out of the city so they could leave for the West. Then ruler and subjects held fast to virtue to return to the truth. The elder took leave of the king of the Religion-Honouring Kingdom. As he rode along, he said in great delight, "Wukong, you've employed an excellent method this time and achieved a great merit."

"O Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "where did you find so many barbers to shave off so many heads during the night?" Thereupon Pilgrim gave a thorough account of how he underwent transformations and exercised magic powers. Master and disciples laughed so hard they could hardly get their mouths shut. In that very moment of gaiety, they suddenly saw a tall mountain blocking their path. Reining in his horse, the Tang Monk said, "Disciples, look how rugged that mountain is. We must be careful!"

"Relax! Relax!" said Pilgrim with a laugh. "I guarantee you there's nothing to be afraid of!"

"Stop saying there's nothing!" replied Tripitaka. "I can see how precipitous the mountain peak is, and even from a great distance there appear to be violent vapours and savage clouds soaring up from it. I'm getting more and more apprehensive; my whole body's turning numb, and I'm filled with troubled thoughts."

Still laughing, Pilgrim said, "And you've long forgotten the Heart *Thread* of the Crow's Nest Zen Master."

"I do remember it," said Tripitaka.

"You may remember the *Thread*," said Pilgrim, "but there're two sentences of Verse that you've forgotten."

"Which two sentences?" Tripitaka asked.

Pilgrim said, "*Seek not afar for God on Spirit Mount; mount Spirit lives only inside your mind. There's in each man a Spirit Mount heap; beneath this heap you must be refined.*"<sup>1</sup>

"Disciple," said Tripitaka, "you think I don't know this? According to these two sentences, the lesson of all scriptures concerns only the cultivation of the mind."

"Of course that goes without saying," said Pilgrim. "For when the mind's pure, it shines forth as a solitary lamp and when the mind's secure, the entire phenomenal world becomes clarified. The tiniest error however, makes for the way to slothfulness and then you'll never succeed even in ten millennia. Maintain your vigilance with the utmost sincerity and Thunderclap will be right before your eyes. But when you afflict yourself like that with fears and troubled thoughts, then the Great Way and Thunderclap seem far away indeed. Let's stop all these wild guesses. Follow me."

When the elder heard these words, his mind and spirit immediately cheered up as all worries subsided. The 4 of them proceeded and a few steps brought them into the mountain. This was what met their eyes: *the mountain's truly a good mountain. Look closely, its mixed colours show! On top the clouds wander and drift; tree shades are cool before the cliff. Birds screechy and shrill; beasts savage and fierce. 1000 pines in the forest; a few bamboos on the summit. Those snarling are grey wolves fighting for food; growling are tigers struggling for feed. Wild apes wail long as they search for fresh fruits; the deer climb over flowers to reach the peak. A souging breeze and gurgling stream where oft one hears the coos of birds unseen. In a few places creepers pull and tug; by the brook orchids mix with fine grasses. Strange rocks sharply etched; hanging cliffs sheer and straight. Foxes and raccoons dash by in packs; badgers and gibbons frolic in bands. The traveller troubled by such ruggedness, can do little with an old path's curviness!* Wary and cautious, master and disciples walked along, and all at once they heard the howling of a strong gust. Becoming fearful, Tripitaka said, "A wind's risen!"

Pilgrim said, "Spring has a temperate wind, summer a warm one. Autumn has a west wind, and winter has a north wind. There are winds in all four seasons. Why fear a gust of wind now?"

"But this wind's blown up so quickly," replied Tripitaka, "that it can't possibly be a natural wind."

"From ancient times," said Pilgrim, "wind's risen from the ground and clouds have emerged from mountains. How'd there be such a thing as a natural wind?"

Hardly had he finished speaking when they also saw fog rising. That fog truly *spreads out to make the sky opaque as darkness the earth overtakes. The sun wholly loses its light; all reciting birds vanish from sight. It seems like Chaos returning, dust both flying, and churning. When summit trees all disappear, could a herb-picker go near?* Becoming more alarmed than ever, Tripitaka said, "Wukong the wind's hardly subsided. Why's there such fog rising?"

"Let's jump to no conclusion," replied Pilgrim. "Let our master dismount and the two brothers can stand guard here. I'll go see whether the situation's evil or auspicious." *Dear Great Sage!* 1 snap of his torso shot him up to mid-air: shading his brows with his hand, he opened wide his fiery eyes to peer downward and at once discovered that there was indeed a monster-spirit sitting by a hanging cliff.

Look how he appears: *a burly body swathed in coloured hues, stalwart and tall, he seems most spirited. His fangs push through his mouth like drills of steel; nose in the centre's a hook of jade. His golden eyes flaring, fowl and beasts take fright. His silver beard bristling, god and ghosts grow sad. Perched firmly by the ledge he flaunts his might by belching wind and fog he plies his wiles.* Standing in rows to the left and right of him were some thirty or forty little fiends, all watching his magic exercise as he belched out wind and spat out fog. Chuckling to himself, Pilgrim said, "My master's a little prescience! He said it's no natural wind and indeed a stunt of this monster's that brought it forth. If old monkey uses his iron rod now to deliver a blow downward, it'll be nothing but a *Garlic Pounder*. I'll strike him dead but it'll also ruin old monkey's reputation." Valiant all his life, Pilgrim never quite knew how to stab people in the back. He said to himself instead, "I'll go back and give some business to Bullseye Eight Rules. Let him come first to do battle with this monster-spirit. If Eight Rules is capable of defeating this monster, it'll be his good fortune. If he's not strong enough and gets himself captured, then I'll go rescue him. That's the proper way to enlarge my fame. But wait! Usually he's quite lazy and refuses to take the initiative in anything. Nonetheless he's bull-like and loves to eat. Let me trick him a little and see what he'll say."

Instantly dropping down from the clouds, he went before Tripitaka who asked, "Wukong, how's the situation in the wind and fog?"

"It seems to have cleared up right now," replied Pilgrim, "for there's hardly any wind or fog."

"Yes," said Tripitaka, "they do seem to have subsided."

"Master," said Pilgrim with a chuckle, "my eyesight is usually quite good but this time I've made a mistake. I'd thought that there might be a monster in the wind and fog but there wasn't."

"What is it then?" asked Tripitaka.

"There's a village not too far ahead," said Pilgrim, "and the families there are quite devoted to good works. They are steaming white-grain rice and bleached-flour buns to feed the monks. The fog, I suppose, could have been the steam coming from their steamers, a sure sign of their good works."

When 8 Rules heard this, he thought it was the truth. Pulling Pilgrim aside, he said softly, "Elder Brother, did you take a meal with them before you came back?"

"I didn't eat much," said Pilgrim, "for the vegetable dishes were a bit too salty for my taste."

"Bah!" exclaimed 8 Rules. "No matter how salty they might be, I'd have eaten until my stomach was filled. If I'm too thirsty, I'll come back and drink water."

"Do you want to eat?" asked Pilgrim.

"Of course," replied 8 Rules, "because I'm just feeling a little hungry! I'd like very much to go and eat something. What do you think?"

"Brother," said Pilgrim, "you'd not mention this. An ancient book said, 'When the dad is present, the son should not act on his own.'<sup>12</sup> If Master remains here who dares go there first?"

"If you don't speak up," said 8 Rules, giggling, "I'll be able to go."

"I'll not," said Pilgrim. "I'd like to see how you manage to get away." That Idiot was peculiarly endowed with glutton-ish intelligence. Walking forward, he saluted deeply and said, "Master, just now Elder Brother told us that there are families in the village ahead who are feeding the monks. Our horse here however, is bound to bother people once we get there. Won't it be a nuisance when we've to find feed or hay for him? It's a good thing that the sky is now cleared of wind and fog. Why don't you sit here for a while and let me go find some nice, tender grass to feed the horse? Then we may proceed to beg for our meal from those households."

"Marvellous!" said a delighted Tang Monk. "How is it that you're so industrious today? Go, and return quickly!" Chuckling to himself, that Idiot left at once, only to be pulled back by Pilgrim, saying, "Brother, those families there will feed only handsome monks, not ugly ones."

"If you put it that way," said 8 Rules, "it means I've to undergo transformation again."

"Exactly," said Pilgrim, "you'd better change a little."

*Dear Idiot!* He too had the ability of thirty-six transformations. After he walked into the fold of the mountain, he made the magic sign and recited a spell; with one shake of his body he changed into a rather thin and short priest. His hand striking a wooden fish, he began to mutter something as he walked. He knew nothing of recting scriptures of course and all he could mumble was "Noble Eminence!" The fiend ordered the various fiends to form a circle at the entrance of the main road after he had retrieved the wind and fog and wait for the travellers. Idiot had the misfortune to walk right into the circle. The various fiends at once had him surrounded; some tugged at his clothes while others pulled at his sash. As they surged around him, 8 Rules said, "Stop pulling! I'll eat from you house by house!"

"Monk," said the fiends, "what do you want to eat?"

"You people want to feed the monks," said 8 Rules, "and I've come to take my meal."

"So, you think we're feeding the monks," said one of the monsters. "You don't know that we specialize in eating monks here. Since we're monstrous mortals who have attained the Way in the mountain, we're particularly fond of catching monks and bringing them into our house to have them steamed in steamers. And you want to eat our meals instead!"

On hearing this, 8 Rules was so horrified that he began to castigate Pilgrim, saying, "This Ban-Horse-Plague is such a rogue! He lied to me about the feeding of monks in this village. What village is there, and what feeding of monks? These are monster-spirits!" Exasperated by their pulling, Idiot at once changed back into his original form and took out his muckrake from his waist. A few wild blows sent those little monsters retreating. They dashed back in fact to report to the old fiend: "Great King, disaster!"

"What sort of disaster?" asked the old fiend. One of the little monsters said, "From the front of the mountain arrived a monk who looked quite neat. I said that we'd take him home to be steamed, and if we'd not finish him immediately, we'd have parts of him cured and left for bad weather. I didn't expect him to know how to change."

"What did he change into?" asked the old monster.

"Nothing that looks human!" said the little monster. "Long horn, huge ears, and a tuft of hair behind his head. Wielding a muckrake with both his hands, he delivered blows madly at us. We're so scared that we ran back to report to the great king."

"Don't be afraid," said the old fiend. "Let me go look."

He held up an iron club and walked forward only to discover that Idiot was ugly indeed. This was how he appeared: *a horn, pestle-like, over 3 feet long and teeth protruding like silver prongs. Bright like lightning a pair of eyeballs round, 2 ears that whip the wind in hu-hu sound. Arrow-like hairs behind his head are seen; his whole body's skin is both coarse and green. His hands hold up a thing bizarre and queer: a muckrake of 9 prongs which all men fear.* Forcing himself to be bold, the monster-spirit shouted: "Where did you come from? What's your name? Tell me quickly and I'll spare your life!"

With a chuckle 8 Rules said, "My child, so you don't recognise your Ancestor Bullseye! Come up here and I'll recite for you: *with huge mouth and fangs I've great magic might. Emperor Jade made me Marshal Heavenly Reeds. The boss of Heaven's eighty-thousand marines comforts and joys I'd in the halls of light. Because I mocked Change when I was drunk and flaunted my strength at a wrongful hour – one shove of my horn toppled Tushita; Queen-Mum's divine herbs I then devoured –Emperor Jade pounded me two thousand times and banished me from the Three Heavens' realm. Though told to nourish my primal spirit, I became again a monster down below. About to marry at the Village Gao, I met Brother Sun – it's my wretched fate! Quite defeated by his golden-hooped rod, I'd to salute and take the Religious vow: a coolie who bears luggage and leads the horse, owes the Tang Monk a debt in former life! This iron-legged Heavenly Reed's name's Bullseye; and my religious name's Eight Rules.*"

On hearing these words, the monster-spirit snapped, "So you're the disciple of the Tang Monk. I've always heard that the flesh of the Tang Monk's most edible. Now that you've barged in here, you think I'll spare you? Don't run away! Watch my club!"

"Cursed beast!" said 8 Rules. "So you used to be a Doctor in Dyeing!"

"Why was I a Doctor in Dyeing?" asked the monster-spirit.

"If you're not," replied 8 Rules, "how'd you know the use of a stirring club?"

The fiend of course permitted no further chatter; he drew near and struck madly. The 2 of them thus began quite a furious battle in the fold of the mountain: *the 9-pronged muckrake, 1 single iron club – the rake in motion churned like violent wind; the club used deftly flew like sudden rain. One was a nameless, vile fiend blocking the mountain path; 1 was sinful Heavenly Reeds helping Nature's lord. With Nature righted, why fear demons or fiends? On tall mountains, earth would not beget gold. That 1's club parried like a serpent bolting from the deep; this 1's rake came like a dragon breaking from the banks. Their shouts, thunderous, rocked mountains and streams; cries, heroic, stirred the depths of earth. 2 valiant fighters each showing his power to wage a life-risking contest of might.* Summoning his own powers, 8 Rules engaged the monster-spirit who also shouted for the little fiends to have his opponent encircled. Pilgrim standing behind the Tang Monk, burst out laughing all of a sudden.

"Elder Brother," asked Sand-monk, "why're you snickering?"

"Bullseye Eight Rules is truly idiotic!" said Pilgrim. "When he heard that people were feeding monks, he was deceived into leaving immediately and still hasn't returned after all this time. If his rake managed to beat back a monster-spirit, you'd be able to watch him come back in triumph and clamour for merit. But if he could not withstand him and got himself captured, then that would be my misfortune also, for I don't know how many times, backward and forward, he would castigate me as Ban-Horse-Plague. Awakened to Purity, stop talking to me for a while. Let me go see what's happening."

Dear Great Sage! Without letting the elder know, he quietly pulled a hair from the back of his head and blew his mortal breath on it, crying, "Change!" It changed into his appearance to accompany both Sand-monk and the elder. His true body left with his spirit to shoot up into the air and look: he soon discovered that Idiot, surrounded by the fiends, was gradually losing ground, the movements of his muckrake slackening.

Pilgrim could no longer restrain himself; lowering his cloud, he cried out in a loud voice, "Don't worry 8 Rules! Old monkey's here!" When that Idiot heard Pilgrim's voice, he was stirred to greater strength than ever as he attacked madly with his rake. Unable to withstand him, the monster-spirit said, "A moment ago this monk was beginning to weaken. Why is it that he has turned more ferocious all at once?"

"My child," said 8 Rules, "you'd not try to oppress me! A family member of mine has arrived!" Ever more fiercely he delivered blows at his opponent's head and face, until the monster-spirit could hardly parry his blows and led the other monsters to retreat in defeat. When Pilgrim saw the monster-spirit flee however, he did not draw near. Turning his cloud around, he went back to where he had been, and with one shake retrieved his hair. Being of fleshly eyes and mortal stock, the elder did not perceive what had taken place.

In a little while, Idiot also returned; though he was the winner he had been so exercised that he was snivelling from the nose and foaming at the mouth. Panting hard, he walked near to call out, "Master!" Astonished by the sight of him, the elder said, "Eight Rules, you went to cut some grass for the horse. How's it that you're returning in such terrible shape? Could it be that people on the mountain are guarding the grass and refuse to let you cut it?"

Putting down his rake, Idiot began to slap his head and stamp his feet, saying, "Master, don't ask! If I told you, I'd be embarrassed to death!"

"Why?" asked the elder.

8 Rules said, "Elder Brother tricked me! He said at first that there was no monster-spirit in the wind and fog, that there was no evil omen. It was, he said, a village, and its families were devoted to virtue. They were steaming white-grain rice and bleached-flour buns to feed the monks. Since I thought it was the truth and was feeling so hungry, I wanted to get there and beg some first, on the excuse that I was cutting grass for the horse. Little did I expect that there would be quite a few fiends who had me surrounded. I've been fighting bitterly with them all this time. If it hadn't been for the assistance lent by Elder Brother's mourning staff, I'd have never escaped the net and come back here."

On one side Pilgrim began to laugh, saying, "This Idiot's babbling! The moment you become a thief, you like to shift the blame on a whole bunch of people. I was watching Master right here. Since when did I leave his side?"

"That's right!" said the elder. "Wukong hasn't left me at all."

Jumping up and down, 8 Rules screamed, "Master, you just don't know. He has an alibi!"

The elder said, "Wukong, are there really fiends?" Knowing that he could no longer fool him, Pilgrim saluted and said, chuckling, "There are a few small ones but they don't dare bother us. 8 Rules, come over here. I want to entrust you with something truly worthwhile. When we escort Master through this rugged mountain road, we'd act as if we're on military maneuvers."

"What would we do if we're?" asked 8 Rules.

"You can be the path-finding general and open up the road in front," replied Pilgrim. "You needn't do anything if the monster-spirit doesn't show up but if he appears, you fight with him. If you prevail, it will be regarded as your meritorious fruit." 8 Rules calculated that the monster-spirit's abilities were about the same as his, and so he said, "I don't mind dying at his hands! Let me lead the way!"

"This Idiot!" said Pilgrim with a chuckle, "If he mouths such unlucky words first, how can he make any progress?" 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, do you know the proverb? *A prince at a banquet will either be drunk or fed; a fighter on the field will either be hurt or dead.* I want to say something amiss first, and then I may prove to be the stronger afterward."

Delighted, Pilgrim saddled the horse at once and asked the master to mount. With Sand-monk toting the luggage, they all followed 8 Rules into the mountain. The monster-spirit led those several defeated little fiends back to their own cave. Taking a seat high on a rocky edge, he fell completely silent. Many of the little fiends who had remained behind as household guards crowded around him to ask, "Great King, when you go out, you frequently return in a happy mood. Why are you so troubled today?"

"Little ones," replied the old monster, "normally when I go out to patrol the mountain, I grab a few humans or beasts – regardless of where they are from – to take back home for you to feast on. Today my luck's rather poor, for I ran into an adversary."

"What adversary?" asked the little monsters.

"He happens to be a monk," replied the old monster, "a disciple of the scripture-seeker Tang Monk from the Land of the East whose name is Bullseye 8 Rules. I was defeated by blows from his muckrake. I'm damn mad! For years I've heard people say that the Tang Monk is an Arhat who has practiced austerities in ten disciples. If someone eats a piece of his flesh, his age will be lengthened, and he'll attain longevity. Little did I expect him to arrive this day at our mountain. I wanted so badly to seize him and have him steamed for food but I didn't know he had a disciple like that under him." He had hardly finished speaking when a little monster stepped forward from the ranks. Facing the old monster above, he sobbed three times aloud and then he laughed three times. "Why are you weeping and crying?" snapped the old monster. The little monster knelt down to say, "Just now the great king says that he wants to eat the Tang Monk but I'd like to tell you that this monk's flesh is impossible to eat."

The old monster said, "People everywhere claim that one piece of his flesh will enable one to live long without growing old, to acquire an age as lasting as Heaven's. Why do you say that it's impossible to eat?"

"If it were possible," replied the little monster, "he wouldn't have made it here, for he would have been devoured by monster-spirits elsewhere. He's three disciples under him, you see."

"Do you know which three?" asked the old monster. "His eldest disciple is Pilgrim Sun," said the little monster, "and his third disciple is Sand-monk. This Bullseye 8 Rules is his second disciple."

"How strong's Sand-monk when compared with Bullseye 8 Rules?" asked the old monster.

"About the same," replied the little monster.

"What about that Pilgrim Sun? How does he compare with Bullseye?"

Sticking out his tongue, the little monster said, "I daren't speak! That Pilgrim Sun's vast magic powers and knows many ways of transformation! Five centuries ago, he caused great disturbance at the Celestial Palace. Those Twenty-eight Constellations<sup>3</sup> from the Region Above, the Nine Luminaries, the Twelve Horary Branches, the Five Nobles and Four Ministers, the Stars of East and West, the gods of North and South, the Deities of the Five Mountains and the Four Rivers, and the divine warriors of entire Heaven couldn't tangle successfully with him. How'd you've the nerve to want to eat the Tang Monk?"

"How do you know so much about him?" asked the old monster.

The little monster said, "I used to live with the great kings of the Lion-Camel Cave at the Lion-Camel Ridge.<sup>4</sup> Those great kings, not knowing anything better, wanted to devour the Tang Monk. When Pilgrim Sun used his golden-hooped rod to fight inside our door, alas, he reduced us to the condition like the title of a domino combination: Minus One, Abolish Six! I was intelligent enough, fortunately, to slip out the back door and come here to be received by the great king. That's how I found out about his abilities!" When the old monster heard these words, he paled with fright, for as the saying goes, "Even a great general is afraid of augury." When he heard a member of his own household speaking like that, how could he not be frightened?

At that anxious moment, another little monster went forward to say, "Great King, don't be upset, and don't be frightened. The proverb tells us that 'Success comes step-by-step.' If you desire to devour the Tang Monk, let me offer you a plan to seize him."

"What sort of plan do you've?" asked the old monster.

"One called 'The Plan of Plum Blossoms with Parted Petals,'" answered the little monster. "What do you mean by that?" asked the old monster.

The little monster said, "Take a roll call of all the monsters in the cave, young and old; select a hundred out of the thousands, ten out of the hundred, and finally three out of those ten. These three must all have abilities and the capacity for transformation. They will all change into the great king's appearance, wearing his armour and holding his club, and then be placed in ambush. The first one will engage Bullseye 8 Rules in battle; the next, Pilgrim Sun; and the third, Sand-monk. We'll risk these three little monsters to induce those three brothers to leave their master. Then the great king will be able to stretch forth his hand from mid-air to seize the Tang Monk like 'Fetching Things from One's Pocket,' like 'squeezing a Fly in the Fish Bowl.' That's not too difficult, is it?"

On hearing this the old monster was filled with delight. "This is a most marvellous plan!" said he. "When we set out, I'll not do anything if we can't catch the Tang Monk. But if we do catch him, I'll not treat you lightly. I'll appoint you as our vanguard officer."

The little monster respected to thank him before giving the order for the roll call. When all the monster-spirits of the cave, young and old, were summoned into their presence, three able little monsters were indeed selected. All of them were told to change into the form of the old monster; each holding the iron club, they were placed in ambuscade to wait for the Tang Monk. Elder Tang free of cares and worries, followed 8 Rules up the main road. After they had proceeded for a long time, a loud pop from the side of the road suddenly brought out a little monster who rushed forward and attempted to seize the elder. "Eight Rules," cried Pilgrim Sun, "the monster-spirit is here! Why don't you do something?"

Without bothering to distinguish one from the other, Idiot whipped out his muckrake and dashed forward to attack madly the monster-spirit who met his blows with an iron club. Back and forth, the two of them fought beneath the mountain slope, when another fiend leaped out from some bushes with a pop and headed straight for the Tang Monk.

"Master, things are going wrong!" cried Pilgrim. "Eight Rules is so blind that he has allowed the monster-spirit to slip by him to come here to grab you. Let old monkey go beat him off!" Hurriedly he wielded his rod and rushed forward, bellowing, "Where are you going? Watch my rod!" Without uttering a word, the monster-spirit lifted his club to meet him. Beneath the grassy knoll the two of them thus rushed together, and as they fought, another monster-spirit leaped out from behind the mountain to the howling of a strong gust and headed straight for the Tang Monk.

When Sand-monk saw him, he was horrified. "Master!" he cried. "Both Big Brother and Second Elder Brother must be so dim of sight that they allowed the monster-spirit to slip past them and come to grab you! Sit here on the horse, and let old Sand go capture him!"

This monk without distinguishing between good and ill either, immediately wielded the staff to block the iron club of the monster-spirit. They strove together most bitterly, shouting and screaming at each other as they gradually drifted away. When the old fiend, flying through the air, discovered the Tang Monk sitting all alone on the horse, he reached down with his five steel-like claws; with one grasp he lifted the master away from the horse and stirrup. The monster-spirit then took him away in a gust of wind. How pitiful! This is why it's hard for *Chan-nature, demon-plagued, can't bear right fruit. River Float meets again his Ill-luck Star!* Lowering the wind, the old monster brought the Tang Monk into the cave, shouting, "Vanguard!" The little fiend who planned all this ran forward to kneel down, saying, "I dare not accept the title! I dare not accept the title!"

"Why do you say this?" asked the old monster. "When a great general gives his word, it's as if the white has been dyed black! Just now I told you that I'd not do anything if we'd not catch the Tang Monk but if we did, you'd be appointed vanguard of our forces. Today your marvellous plan indeed succeeded. How could I betray you? You may bring the Tang Monk over here, and ask the little ones to fetch water and scrub the pan, to haul in the wood and start a fire. Steam him a bit, so you and I can eat a piece of his flesh to lengthen our age."

"Great King," said the vanguard, "let's not eat him just yet."

The old fiend said, "We've captured him. Why shouldn't we eat him?" The vanguard replied, "Of course the great king may eat him, and if you do, both Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk even may be persuaded that they should overlook the matter. But that bossy Pilgrim Sun, I fear, may let loose his viciousness once he learns that we've devoured his master. He doesn't even have to come fight with us. All he needs do is plunge that golden-hooped rod of his into the midriff of our mountain; it'll create such a gaping hole that the mountain itself will topple over. Then we'll not even have a place to stay."

"Vanguard," said the old fiend, "what sort of noble opinion do you've?"

"As I see the matter," replied the vanguard, "you'd send the Tang Monk into the back garden and tie him to a tree. Don't feed him any rice for two or three days. That'll clean up his inside, for one thing, and for another, it should give us the time we need until his three disciples stop searching for him at our door. When we know for certain that they have left, we'll then take him out and enjoy him at our leisure. Isn't that better?"

"It is, it is!" said the old fiend, laughing. "What the vanguard says makes perfect sense!" The order was immediately given that the Tang Monk would be brought into the back garden where he was bound to a tree with a rope. Then the little fiends all went back to the front to wait on the old monster.

Look at that elder! Enduring most bitterly the tight fetter and the restraint of ropes, he could not stop the tears from rolling down his cheeks. "O disciples!" he cried. "In which mountain are you trying to capture fiends, and on what road are you chasing monsters? I've been brought by a brazen demon to suffer here. When will we ever meet again? The pain's killing me!" As tears streamed from both his eyes, he heard someone calling from a tree opposite him, saying, "Elder, so you, too, have entered here!"

Calming down, the elder said, "Who are you?"

The man said, "I'm a woodcutter from this mountain who was captured by that mountain lord and brought here. I've been bound for three days, and I imagine that they want to eat me."

"O woodcutter!" said the elder, as tears began to flow once more. "If you die, you're all by yourself and you don't have any worries. I however, cannot die in such a carefree manner."

"Elder," said the woodcutter, "you're someone who has left home. You've neither parents above you nor wife and children below you. If you die, you die. What cares or concerns do you've?"

The elder said, "I'm someone sent by the Land of the East to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. By the decree of Emperor Taizong of the Tang court, I'm to bow to the living God and acquire from him the true scriptures that will be used for the redemption of those orphaned lost souls in the Region of Darkness. If I lose my life here, would that not have dashed the expectation of the emperor and the high hopes of his ministers? Would that not grievously disappoint those countless mistreated souls in the City of Wrongful Death? They'd never be redeemed and all this attempt at meritorious fruit would be reduced to wind and dust! How'd I die carefree and without concern?"

When the woodcutter heard these words, he too began to shed tears as he said, "Elder, if you must die in this manner, then my death's even more grievous. I lost my dad in childhood and I've lived all my life with my widowed mum. We've no other livelihood except my gathering firewood. My old mum's now eighty-three and I'm her sole support. If I lose my life, who'll take care of her or bury her? O misery! O misery! This pain's killing me."

On hearing this, the elder waived aloud, crying, "How pitiful! How pitiful! *If mountain rustics still long for their kin, this poor monk's been trained to recite Threads in vain.* To serve the ruler or one's parents follows the same principle. You live by the kindness of your parents and I do by the kindness of my ruler." Truly it is that *the tearful eye beholds a tearful eye; a broken heart escorts a broken heart!* We'll leave for the moment Tripitaka in suffering and confinement. Pilgrim Sun having defeated the little monster beneath the grassy knoll, hurried back to the side of the main road. His master had vanished; only the white horse and the luggage remained. He was so horrified that he began searching toward the summit at once, leading the horse and poling the luggage. *Alas! This is how woe-beset River Float keeps meeting more woes! The demon-routing Great Sage's by demons plagued!*

## 102

### Wood Mum lending power, conquers the fiendish creature; Metal Squire extirpates the deviates using his magic

The Great Sage Sun was searching and calling for his master all over the summit as he led the horse and toted the luggage. It was then that he saw Bullseye 8 Rules run up to him panting hard and saying, "Elder Brother, why're you hollering?"

"Master's disappeared," replied Pilgrim. "Have you seen him?"

"Originally," said 8 Rules, "I followed the Tang Monk to be a priest. But you've to make fun of me again, telling me to play the general! I took enormous risk to fight with that monster-spirit for quite some time before I came back here with my life. You and Sand-monk however, were supposed to be guarding Master. How is it that you're asking me instead?"

Pilgrim said, "Brother, I'm not blaming you. Perhaps you're a little dazed and didn't realise that you had allowed the monster-spirit to slip back here to seize Master. I went to strike at the monster-spirit, relying on Sand-monk to guard Master. Now even Sand-monk has disappeared!"

"Sand-monk," said 8 Rules with a giggle, "must have taken Master somewhere to drop his load!" Hardly had he finished speaking when Sand-monk appeared. "Sand-monk," asked Pilgrim, "where has Master gone?"

"Both of you must have been seeing double," said Sand-monk, "and that's why you allowed the monster-spirit to slip back here to try to seize Master. Old Sand took off to fight with him but Master should be sitting by himself on the horse." All at once Pilgrim became so enraged that he jumped up and down as he cried, "We've fallen for their plan! We've fallen for their plan!"

"What sort of a plan?" asked Sand-monk.

"This," replied Pilgrim, "is called 'The Plan of Plum Blossoms with Parted Petals,' that they used to split us brothers apart before they dashed right into our midst to haul Master away. Heavens! Heavens! Heavens! What'll we do?"

As he spoke, he could hardly hold back the tears rolling down his cheeks. "Don't cry!" said 8 Rules. "Once you cry, you turn into a namby-pamby! He can't be very far for he's to be somewhere in this mountain. Let's go search for him." With no better alternative, the 3 of them had to enter the mountain to begin their search. After they had journeyed some twenty miles, they reached a cave-dwelling beneath a hanging cliff with *steep summits half appearing and strange rocks so rugged; rare blossoms and plants most fragrant, red apricots, green peaches most luscious. The old tree before the*

ledge, its skin 40 spans is frost-white and rain-resistant; the hoary pine beyond the door; its jade-green hues rise skyward 2000 feet. Wild cranes in pairs come often before the cave to exercise in the breeze; mountain fowl in 2s would perch on the boughs to recite in the sun. Clusters of yellow vines like hanging ropes; rows of misty willows like dripping gold. A square pond storing up water conceals an aged dragon which has yet to change; in a deep cave close to the mountain lives a man-eating old fiend of many years. In truth no less than a mortal's lair, this place that gathers in the wind and air. On seeing the cave-dwelling, Pilgrim in two or three steps bounded right up to the door to examine it more closely. The stone door was tightly closed but across the top of the door was a slab of stone bearing this inscription in large letters:

The Mist-Concealing Mountain; the Broken-Peak, Joined-Ring Cave

"Eight Rules," said Pilgrim, "let's move! This is where the monster-spirit lives and Master's to be in the house." Strengthened by the presence of his companions, Idiot unleashed his violence and delivered as hard a blow as he could on the stone door, making a huge, gaping hole in it. "Fiend," he cried, "send my master out quickly lest this muckrake tear down the door and finish off your entire household!"

Those little monsters guarding the door hurried inside to report: "Great King, we've brought on a disaster!"

"What disaster?" asked the old fiend.

"Someone has broken through our front door," replied one of the little monsters, "yelling for his master." Astounded, the old fiend said, "I wonder whoever could have found his way here."

"Don't be afraid!" said the vanguard. "Let me go out and have a look." This little fiend dashed up to the front door and stuck his head out sideways through the hole to look around. When he saw the huge horn and large ears, he at once turned back and called out, "Great King, don't be afraid of him! This is Bullseye 8 Rules who has not much ability and won't dare be unruly. If he does, we'll open our door and take him in here to be prepared and steamed. The only person we need fear is the monk with a hairy face and a thunder-god beak."

When he heard this through the door, 8 Rules said, "O Elder Brother! He's not afraid of me but only of you. Master has to be in his house. You go forward quickly."

"Lawless cursed beast!" shouted Pilgrim. "Your Grandpa Sun is here! Send out my master and I'll spare your life!"

"Great King," said the vanguard, "it's bad! Pilgrim Sun has found his way here!" The old fiend began to reprehend him, saying, "It's all because of that so-called 'Parted Petals' plan of yours that disaster has descended on our door! How will this end?"

"Please relax, Great King," said the vanguard, "and don't find fault with me. I recall that Pilgrim Sun happens to be a kind and forbearing ape. Though he may possess vast magic powers, he also loves flattery. Let us take out a fake human head to deceive him a little, and flatter him a little, too with a few words. Just tell him that we've devoured his master. If we can deceive him, the Tang Monk will be ours for enjoyment. If we can't, we'll try something else."

"Where shall we find a fake human head?" asked the old fiend. The vanguard said, "Let's see if I'd make one."

Marvellous fiend! Using a steel axe, he cut off a lump of willow root, shaped it into a skull, and threw some human blood on it. In this gory fashion the head was taken out to the door on a lacquered tray by a small fiend who called out: "Holy Dad Great Sage, please calm your anger and allow me to report to you."

Pilgrim Sun was indeed susceptible to flattery; when he heard the 'Holy Dad Great Sage,' he stopped 8 Rules, saying, "Let's not move yet and see what they have to say."

"After your master had been taken into the cave by our Great King," said the little fiend holding the tray, "those uncouth young fiends of ours did not know any better than to try to swallow him at once. Some tore at him while others gnawed at him. Your master was thus devoured, and all we've left here is his head."

"It's all right if he's been devoured," said Pilgrim, "but show me the head and let me see if it's real." The little fiend threw out the head through the hole in the door. The moment Bullseye 8 Rules saw it, he began to weep, saying, "How pitiful! We'd one kind of master entering through this door but now we've this kind of master coming out."

"Idiot," said Pilgrim, "why don't you try to determine whether this is a real human head before you start weeping?"

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" said 8 Rules. "Could there be a false human head?"

"This happens to be a false one," replied Pilgrim. "How can you tell?" asked 8 Rules. "If you threw down a real human head," said Pilgrim, "it would fall on the ground with a dull thud whereas a false head would make a loud rattle. If you don't believe me, let me throw it down for you to hear." He took it up and hurled it against a boulder, and it produced a loud clang.

"Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "it rattles, all right."

"If it rattles," said Pilgrim, "it's a false one. Let me bring out its true form." Whipping out his golden-hooped rod, he cracked it open with one blow. 8 Rules looked more closely and discovered that it was only a lump of willow root. Unable to contain himself, 8 Rules began to utter a string of abuses, crying, "You bunch of hairy clods! You've already hidden my master in the cave, and yet you dare use a lump of willow root to deceive your Ancestor Bull! Could my master have been a willow spirit?"

The little fiend who held the tray was so horrified that he shook all over as he ran back to report: "Hard! Hard! Hard! Hard! Hard! Hard!"

"Why so many hard?" asked the old fiend.

The little fiend said, "Both Bullseye 8 Rules and Sand-monk were deceived but Pilgrim Sun happens to be an antique dealer who knows his stuff! He recognised the fact that it was a false human head. If you'd find a real head for him, you might be able to send him away."

"Where could I find one?" said the old fiend. "Ah, I know! In our skinning pavilion we still have several human heads that haven't been eaten yet. Go pick one out for us." A few of the fiends went immediately to the pavilion and selected a fresh head that they then gnawed at until it was slick and smooth. The little fiend carried it out to the front again on a tray, crying, "Holy Dad Great Sage, the previous one was indeed a false head. This one however, is the true head of Dad Tang. Our Great King has kept it as a talisman for the house but we're presenting it to you now." With a thud, the head was thrown out through the hole in the door, and it rolled all over, still dripping blood.

When Pilgrim Sun saw that it was a real human head, he had no choice but to weep. 8 Rules and Sand-monk, too, joined in the loud wailing. As he tried to hold back his tears, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother, let's not cry just yet. The weather isn't so good right now, and I fear that it may stink. Let me take it somewhere to have it buried while it's still fresh. Then we can cry some more."

"You're quite right," replied Pilgrim.

Not revolted, Idiot hugged the head to his bosom and ran up the mountain ledge. Having found a spot facing the sun where the wind and air would be collected, he used his rake to dig a hole to try to bury the head. Then he built a grave mound, and called out to Sand-monk, "You and Elder Brother can stay here and weep. Let me go find something to use for offering." Going over to the side of the brook, he selected several large twigs of willow and picked up some egg-shaped pebbles that he brought back to the graveside. The willow twigs were planted on both sides, and the pebbles were placed in a pile in front.

"What do you mean by this?" asked Pilgrim.

"We can pretend that these twigs are pines and cyresses," replied 8 Rules, "so that Master will have a bit of shade on top. The pebbles may be taken as pastries, so that Master will enjoy a small offering."

"Coolie!" snapped Pilgrim. "The man's dead! And you still want to offer him pebbles?"

8 Rules said, "*Mere sentiment of the living to show our filial feeling.*"

"Let's stop this horseplay!" said Pilgrim. "Sand-monk can remain here to guard the grave, the horse, and the luggage. You and I'll go and tear down the cave-dwelling. When we capture the fiendish demon, we'll cut him into ten thousand pieces to avenge our master."

"What Elder Brother says is perfectly right," said Sand-monk, still shedding tears. "The two of you'd put your hearts to this. I'll stand guard here."

Marvellous 8 Rules! He took off his black silk shirt and tightened his undergarment before lifting his rake high to follow Pilgrim. Striding forward, the two of them without waiting for further discussion, smashed down the stone door. "Give us back a living Tang Monk!" they thundered so loudly that the heavens shook.

Those various fiends inside the cave, old and young were so terrified that they all cast their blame on the vanguard as the old fiend asked him, "These monks have smashed their way inside our door. What'll we do?"

The vanguard replied, "The ancients have put the matter well: *put your hand in the fish basket and you can't avoid the stink!* Never retreat once you start something! Let's call up the left and right commanders to lead our soldiers out to slaughter those monks!"

As he had no better plan than what he heard, the old fiend thereupon gave the order: "Little ones, be of one mind and pick up your best weapons. Follow me out to battle."

With a roar, they stormed out of the cave. Great Sage and 8 Rules quickly retreated a few steps down to a level spot in the mountain. As they faced the various fiends, they shouted, "Who is the leader who has a name? Who is the fiend who has captured our master?"

The various fiends pitched camp immediately and unfurled an embroidered floral banner. Grasping an iron club, the old fiend answered the call in a loud voice, saying, "Brazen monk, don't you recognise me? I'm the Great King of South Mountain, and I've held this place in my sway for several centuries. I've captured and devoured your Tang Monk. What do you propose to do about that?"

"You audacious hairy clod!" scolded Pilgrim. "How many years have you lived that you dare assume the title, South Mountain? Old Lord Li happens to be the patriarch of creation but he still sits to the right of Supreme Purity. A god Siddhartha is the honoured one who governs the world, and yet he still sits beneath the great roc. Kong the Sage is the founder of Confucianism but he assumes the mere title of Master. And you, a cursed beast, dare call yourself some Great King of South Mountain, holding this place in your sway! Don't try to escape! Have a taste of your Grandpa's rod!"

Stepping aside to dodge the blow, the monster-spirit wielded his club to parry the iron rod and said, his eyes glowering, "Your features are those of an ape and yet you dare insult me with so many words! What abilities do you've that you dare behave in such a rowdy manner in front of my door?"

"You nameless cursed beast!" said Pilgrim laughing. "Of course you know nothing of old monkey! Stand still, be brave, and listen to my recital: *At East-Videha, my ancestral home through millennia conceived of Heaven and Earth a stone egg mortal on Mount Flower-Fruit did break and beget me, its progeny. By birth I thus was not of mortal stock for sun and moon did this sage body forge. Myself cultivated was no small thing – alert and keen, a great elixir source. Named the Great Sage, I lived among the clouds and fought the stars, relying on my power. Ten thousand gods couldn't approach me even; it's easy to beat all planets of Heaven. My fame's known in the world's every part; wiles left a trail through the universe. By luck I've now embraced the religious faith to help an elder on his westward way. No one blocks the path I open on the mount though fiends worry when I build a bridge. I'll seize the forest tigers with my might; my hands will tame leopards before the cliff. The East's Right Fruit is coming to the West: that monstrous deviate dares show his head? Since you, cursed beast dare my master devour, your life will surely perish within this hour.*" Alarmed and angered by these words, the fiend clenched his teeth, leaped forward, and struck out at Pilgrim with his iron club. Casually parrying the blow with his rod, Pilgrim wanted to talk some more with him but our 8 Rules could not hold back any longer. He lifted his rake and madly attacked the vanguard of the fiend who met him head-on with the other monsters. This was some brawl on the mountain meadow, truly a marvellous battle: *a priest from an eastern superior state went seeking true scriptures from the blissful West. The South Mount's great leopard belched wind, mist, blocked the path; showing alone his might with a clever plan, and a wily scheme, he bagged in ignorance the Great Tang Monk. He met then the Pilgrim of vast magic power and 8 Rules also of great renown. When fiends on the mountain meadow fought, dust and dirt flew up to bedim the sky. Little fiends shouted over there, madly raising their swords and spears; divine monks bellowed over here, lifting up both rake and rod. The Great Sage was a hero without match; Aware of Ability was both stalwart and strong in years. The South Mountain old fiend and his subject, the vanguard all because of the Tang Monk's 1 piece of flesh had quite forgotten the fear of life or death. These 2 turned hostile for their master's sake; those 2 grew violent desiring the Tang Monk. Back and forth they battled for quite a while; clashing and bumping, they fought to a draw.* When the Great Sage Sun saw how ferocious those little fiends were, how they refused to step back even when they were repeatedly attacked, he resorted to his Magic of Body-Division. Ripping out a bunch of his own hairs, he chewed them to pieces before spitting them out crying, "Change!"

At once they all assumed his appearance, each wielding a golden-hooped rod, and began to push in from the front line of the battle. Those 100 or 200 little fiends found it difficult of course to look after both their front and their rear. Parrying the blows from the left, they could not attend to those coming from their right and so all of them fled for their lives and retreated to the cave. As Pilgrim and 8 Rules also fought their way out from the centre of the battle, pity those monster-spirits who knew no better: those running into the rake received nine bleeding holes while those hugged by the rod had their bones and flesh turned into putt y. That Great King of South Mountain was so terrified that he fled for his life by mounting fog and wind. The vanguard however, could not transform, and he was struck down by one blow of Pilgrim's rod. His original form emerged as an iron-backed grey wolf. Dragging him closer and flipping him over for another look, 8 Rules said, "I wonder how many calves and lambkins this fellow's stolen from people and eaten since his youth!"

With 1 shake of his body Pilgrim retrieved his hair saying, "Idiot, we mustn't delay! Let's chase down the old fiend quickly and ask him to pay for Master's life."

When he turned his head and did not see those little Pilgrims, 8 Rules said, "The magic forms of Elder Brother have all disappeared?"

"I've retrieved them," said Pilgrim.

"Marvellous! Marvellous!" said 8 Rules and the 2 of them returned in delight and triumph.



The old fiend when he fled back into his cave with his life, ordered the little fiends to move boulders and pole mud to the front door. Trembling all over, those fiends who managed to save their lives did indeed barricade the door and dared not show their heads at all. When our Pilgrim led 8 Rules to chase up to the front door, their shouts brought no answer from within, and when 8 Rules used his rake to strike at the barrier of mud, he could not budge it one whit. Realising what had happened, Pilgrim said, "Eight Rules, don't waste your strength. They have barricaded the door."

"In that case," said 8 Rules, "how shall we avenge our master?"

"Let's go back to the grave to see how Sand-monk's doing," said Pilgrim.

The two of them went back to the site and found Sand-monk still weeping. Ever more grief-stricken, 8 Rules abandoned his rake and flung himself on the grave. As he pounded the dirt with his hands, he wailed, "O ill-fated Master! O far-removed Master! Where shall I ever get to see you again?"

"Brother, please calm your sorrow," said Pilgrim. "If this monster-spirit has his front door stopped up, there must be a back door for him to go in and out. The two of you remain here, and let me go back to have another look around."

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, shedding tears. "Do be careful! If they manage to grab even you, it'll be difficult for us to weep. A sob for Master and a sob for Elder Brother – we'll be all confused!"

"Don't worry!" replied Pilgrim. "I'll be able to take care of myself." *Dear Great Sage!* Putting away his rod and tightening his skirt, he went past the mountain slope and immediately heard the sound of gurgling water. He saw turning his head that it came from a brook tumbling down from the peak. Then he discovered a little entrance on the other side of the brook to the left of which there seemed to be a drainage sewer. "It goes without saying," he thought to himself, "that this must be the backdoor. If I present my face like this, some little fiends opening the door might recognise me. I'll change into a little water snake to get through – but wait! If the ghost of Master knew that I'd changed into a snake, he'd blame me because a serpentine creature would ill become a priest. Why not a little crab then? That's no good either for Master will blame me for being a busybody priest." Finally he changed into a water rat and with a whoosh, darted across the brook. Through the drainage sewer he crawled into the courtyard and looked around: at the spot facing the sun were several little fiends hanging up, piece by piece, slabs of human flesh to be dried. "O my dear children!" said Pilgrim to himself. "That's to be Master's flesh! They'd not finish all of him and so want to cure some strips for inclement weather. I'd like to reveal my true form, rush up there, and slaughter them all with one stroke of my rod but that'll only show that I've courage but little wisdom. I'll change again and go inside to find the old fiend to see what's happening."

He leaped out of the sewer and with 1 shake of his body changed into a tiny, winged ant. Truly *his name's Dark Horse, 'a small and feeble thing but long cultivation has formed his wings. In idle moments by a bridge he'd flit or roam beneath a bed to test his wit. He seals his hole, knowing when rain would come; weighed down by dust he would ashes become. So airy and agile he can quickly soar a few times, unknown, past the firewood king.* Stretching his wings without a shadow or sound, he flew directly into the centre hall where he found the old fiend sitting dejectedly. From behind him a small monster leaped out to say, "Great King, ten thousand delights attend you!"

"Where do these delights come from?" asked the old monster.

The little monster said, "Just now I was doing a bit of intelligence work by the brook at our rear entrance, and I heard someone wailing. When I climbed up the peak to take a further look, I found that it was Bullseye 8 Rules, Pilgrim Sun, and Sand-monk who were mourning before a grave. They must have believed that human head was the Tang Monk's and buried it. Now they are weeping beside the grave they dug."

When Pilgrim heard this, he was secretly pleased, saying to himself, "If he could say this, my master must still be hidden here somewhere. He hasn't been devoured. Let me go search further to find out indeed whether Master is dead or alive before I discuss the matter with these monsters."

Dear Great Sage! Soaring high in the centre hall, he looked this way and that and discovered to one side a little door that was tightly shut. Crawling through a crack in the door, he found a large garden inside, from the centre of which faint sounds of grief could be heard. When he flew deep into the garden, he came upon a clump of tall trees, beneath which two persons were tied: one of them was none other than the Tang Monk. Pilgrim was so excited by the sight that he could not refrain from changing back into his original form and approaching to say, "Master."

Recognising him, the elder said, as his tears fell, "Wukong, so you've come! Save me quickly! Wukong! Wukong!"

"Stop calling my name, Master!" said Pilgrim. "There are still people up front, and I fear that they may get wind of this. As long as you're still alive, I can save you. That fiend told us that you had been devoured, using a false human head to deceive us. We've already fought bitterly with him. Please relax, Master. Just bear with me a bit longer. When I've knocked down that monster-spirit, I'll be able to come back here to free you."

Reciting a spell, the Great Sage at once changed back into an ant to return to the centre hall and alight on the main beam. A crowd of those little monsters who had not lost their lives were milling about noisily. From their midst one little monster suddenly dashed out to say, "Great King, when they see that the door is barricaded and that they cannot break it open, they must also give up all hopes of recovering the Tang Monk. After all, the false human head has been turned into a grave. They'll mourn for a day today and for another tomorrow. By the day after tomorrow, they should have fulfilled the obligation of three-day mourning and they will leave. When we've made sure that they have scattered, we can then bring out the Tang Monk and have him finely diced. Pan-fry him with some star anise and Sichuan pepper, and we can enjoy a nice fragrant piece to lengthen our lives."

"Stop talking like that!" said another little monster, clapping his hands. "He'll taste much better if we steam him."

"But not as economical as plain boiling," said another. "At least we can save some firewood that way."

"He is, after all, a rare thing," another spoke up. "We really should cure him with salt, so that we may enjoy him much longer."

When he heard this, perched on the beam, Pilgrim was filled with rage, saying to himself, "What sort of enmity do you've against my master that you'd make such elaborate plans to devour him?" Pulling out a bunch of his own hairs and chewing them to pieces, he spat them out lightly and recited in silence a magic spell. The hairs all changed into sleep-inducing insects that he threw onto the faces of the monsters. As the insects crawled into their noses one by one, the little monsters gradually dropped off until, in no time at all, they had all fallen fast asleep. Only the old monster however, remained restless as he continued to scratch his head and rub his face with both hands. He was sneezing repeatedly so that he kept pinching his nose.

"Could it be that he has found out something?" said Pilgrim. "Let's give him a double-wick lamp!" Pulling off another piece of hair, he fashioned another creature like the ones before and threw it onto his face. Now he had two insects, one entering through his left nostril and the other through his right. Struggling up for a moment, the old monster stretched and yawned a couple of times, and then he too fell into a snoring slumber. Delighted, Pilgrim leaped down and changed back into his original form. Taking out his rod from his ear, he waved it once and it attained the thickness of a duck egg. With a loud clang he smashed the side door to pieces and ran into the rear garden, shouting, "Master!"

"Disciple, untie me quickly," said the elder, "for I'm about to be ruined!"

"Don't hurry, Master," Pilgrim said. "Let me slay the monster-spirit first before I come rescue you." He turned and dashed back into the centre hall. As he was about to strike with upraised rod, he stopped and said, "No good! Let me untie Master first before I strike at him."

He rushed back into the garden, only to think to himself, "I'll slay him first before the rescue." He went back and forth like this two or three times before finally dancing his way into the garden. This sight of him gave the elder some delight even in his sorrow. "Monkey," he said, "it must be that you're overjoyed by the sight of my being still alive, and that is why you're dancing in this manner."

Pilgrim then walked up to him to untie his ropes. As he led his master away, they heard the person tied to another tree facing them call out, "Venerable Dad, please exercise your great mercy and save my life, too!"

Standing still, the elder said, "Wukong, please untie that person also."

"Who is he?" asked Pilgrim. "He's a woodcutter," replied the elder, "who had been captured a day before I was seized. He told me that he has an aged mum whom he thinks of constantly. He's a most filial person, and we might as well rescue him, too."

Pilgrim agreed and untied the man's ropes also; they went out through the rear entrance together and ascended the cliff to cross the swift-flowing brook. "Worthy disciple," said the elder, "I thank you for saving his life and mine! Aware of Ability and Awakened to Purity where are they?"

"The two of them are mourning you," replied Pilgrim. "You may call out to them now." And the elder cried out in a loud voice: "Eight Rules! 8 Rules!"

As he had been weeping till he was half dazed, Idiot wiped his horn and eyes and said, "Sand-monk, Master must have come home to reveal his soul! Isn't it he who's calling us from somewhere?"

Rushing forward, Pilgrim shouted, "Coolie! Who's revealing his soul? Isn't this Master who has returned?" When Sand-monk lifted his head and saw them, he fell to his knees and said, "Master, how you must have suffered! How did Elder Brother manage to rescue you?" Whereupon Pilgrim gave a thorough account of what had taken place.

When he heard this, 8 Rules grew so infuriated that he raised his rake, clenched his teeth, and hacked away the grave mound. Digging out the head, he pounded it to pieces. "Why did you beat it up?" asked the Tang Monk.

"O Master!" said 8 Rules. "I don't know which family this outcast belongs to but he has caused me to weep for him for a long time."

"You'd thank him instead for saving my life," said the Tang Monk. "When you brothers fought your way to their door and demanded my return, the monsters used him as a substitute to ward you off. If it hadn't been for him, I'd have been killed. You'd have him buried, simply as an expression of our priestly gratitude." When he heard these words of the elder, Idiot indeed packed up the mess of flesh and bones and buried it again by digging another grave.

With a chuckle Pilgrim said, "Master, please sit here for a moment, and let me go and finish them off." He leaped down from the cliff and crossed the brook to return to the cave. Taking into the centre hall the ropes that had been used to tie the Tang Monk and the woodcutter, he found the old monster still sleeping. After having bull-tied him, Pilgrim used his golden-hooped rod to lift the bundle up and carried it on his shoulder to leave by the rear entrance. When 8 Rules caught sight of them from a distance, he said, "Elder Brother just loves this lopsided business! Wouldn't it be better if he had found another monster to give him a balanced load?"

Pilgrim drew near and dropped down the old monster, and 8 Rules was about to strike with his rake. "Wait a moment!" said Pilgrim. "We've not seized the little monsters in the cave yet."

"O Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "lead me to them so I can hit them!"

"Hitting them is such a waste of energy," said Pilgrim. "It's better to find some firewood and finish them off that way." On hearing this, the wood-cutter immediately led 8 Rules to the eastern valley to find some broken bamboos, leafless pines, hollow willows, snapped-off vines, yellow artemisia, old reeds, rushes, and parched mulberry. After they had hauled bundles of these into the rear entrance, Pilgrim lit a fire while 8 Rules fanned up a breeze with his ears. As he leaped out of the cave, Great Sage shook his body once to retrieve his hairs. By the time those little monsters awoke, both smoke and fire were pouring out. Alas! Not even half a monster managed to escape, for the cave-dwelling was completely burned out.

When the disciples returned to their master, the elder saw that the old monster was stirring, and he called out: "Disciples, the monster-spirit is awake." Going forward, 8 Rules slew the old fiend with one blow of his rake; its original form appeared to be that of a spotted leopard. "This sort of spotted leopard," said Pilgrim, "can even devour a tiger. Now it has managed to assume human form. Putting it to death will prevent it from causing any further trouble." The elder thanked them over and over again before climbing once more into the saddle.

"Venerable Dad," said the woodcutter, "toward the southwest not far from here is my humble abode. I'd like to invite you there to meet my mum, so that she may salute to thank you all for saving my life. Then we'll escort you to the main road."

Delighted, the elder dismounted and headed southwest with the woodcutter and the 3 disciples. After a short distance they came upon *a path of flagstones moss-lined and wood gates wisteria-entwined. On 4 sides are mountains lambent and trees filled with bird-call strident. Pines and bamboos join in thick green; profuse rare blossoms are seen. Deep in the clouds and out of the way is a bamboo-fenced thatched hut to stay.* From a long way away they caught sight of an old woman, leaning on the wooden gate and weeping bitterly, crying out for her son all the while. When the woodcutter saw his own mum, he abandoned the elder and rushed up to the wooden gate. As he went to his knees, he cried, "Mum, your son's here!"

Embracing him, the old woman said, "O my child! When you didn't return home these last few days, I supposed that you're seized by the mountain lord and killed, and the very thought of it gave me unbearable pain. If you're not harmed, why did you wait till today before returning? Where are your ropes, your pole, and your axe?"

The woodcutter respected before replying, "Mum, your son indeed was taken away by the mountain lord and tied to a tree. It would have been truly difficult to preserve my life if it hadn't been for these several venerable dads. That one happens to be an Arhat sent by the Tang court of the Land of the East to go seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. He too was captured by the mountain lord and bound to a tree. His three disciples however, possess vast magic powers. They succeeded in slaying the mountain lord who turned out to be the spirit of a spotted leopard. Then they burned to death a great number of the little monsters. When they freed and rescued that old venerable dad, they rescued your child as well. Their kindness to me is high as Heaven and thick as Earth! If it hadn't been for them, your child would certainly have perished. Now the mountain is quite safe, and even if your child journeys through the night, there'll be no danger."

When the old woman heard these words, she saluted with each step she took to receive the elder and the three disciples into her thatched cottage. After they were seated, mum and son respected repeatedly to thank them before rushing into the kitchen to prepare a vegetarian meal.

"Brother woodcutter," said 8 Rules, "I realise that yours is a humble livelihood. You may feed us a simple meal but please don't go to the trouble of making any elaborate preparation."

"To tell you the truth, Venerable Dad," replied the woodcutter, "ours indeed is a lowly abode in the mountains. There are no large black mushrooms button mushrooms, Szechwan peppers, or star anise. We've only a few items of wild vegetation to present to you all as a mere token of our gratitude."

“Sorry to have caused you such inconvenience!” said 8 Rules, chuckling. “Just make it snappy, for we’re getting awfully hungry!”

“In a moment! In a moment!” said the woodcutter.

Indeed in a moment the tables and chairs were spread out, wiped clean, and several dishes of wild vegetation were brought out. What can be seen<sup>2</sup> are the *yellow cabbage lightly blanched and white beans pickled and minced. Water polygon-um and purslane, shepherd’s purse and Wild-goose-intestine.* <sup>3</sup>*The Swallow-not-coming*<sup>4</sup> *both fragrant and tender; bean sprouts with small buds both crisp and green. Horse-blue*<sup>5</sup> *roots cooked till soft; dog-footprints*<sup>6</sup> *plainly toasted. Cat’s-ears*<sup>7</sup> and bi<sup>8</sup> *dropped in the wilds. The Ashen-stalk*<sup>9</sup> *cooked very soft, is esculent. The Scissors’-handle*<sup>10</sup> *and Cows’-pool-profit,* <sup>11</sup>*the Hollow-snail*<sup>12</sup> *upturned and filled, the broom-like shepherd’s purse. The broken-rice-qí,* <sup>13</sup>*the Wocaiqi*<sup>14</sup> – *these few items are both fragrant and smooth. Niaoying*<sup>15</sup> *flowers fried in oil and most praiseworthy water-chestnuts. Rushes’ stems and tender watercress – 4 aqueous plants truly rich and pure. The Wheat-wearing-lady*<sup>16</sup> *is coy and good; the Torn-worn-cassock,* <sup>17</sup>*no need to wear it; below the bitter hemp are bamboo props. The Little-bird’s-cotton-coat*<sup>18</sup> and the *Monkey’s-footprints*<sup>19</sup> *are so oily when fried that you’ve to eat them. The Slanted hao, the Green hao, and the Mum-hugging-hao;* <sup>20</sup>*some tiny moths have flown atop the flat buckwheat. To bare Goat-ears*<sup>21</sup> and Gouqi<sup>22</sup> *roots add but Black-blue*<sup>23</sup> *and there’s no need for oil. These wild vegetation and a meal of rice the woodman truly offers as gifts of thanks.* After master and disciples had eaten their fill, they at once made preparation to leave. Not daring to detain them for long, the woodcutter asked his mum to come out to thank and salute their visitors once more while he respected repeatedly. Having tidied his clothes, the woodcutter then took up a staff made from the trunk of a date tree to escort the pilgrims out the door. While Sand-monk led the horse, 8 Rules toted the luggage, and Pilgrim followed closely to 1 side, the elder riding the horse, folded his hands before his chest and said, “Brother Woodcutter, please lead the way. We’ll take proper leave of you when we reach the main road.”

They then descended from the heights and headed for the slope, following the turns of the brook. Musing as he rode, the elder said, “O disciples! *Since leaving my lord to go to the West, I’ve walked the path of an unending quest. In mountains and streams disasters await; my life’s been the fiends’ and monsters’ bait. Tripitaka’s the sole thought on my mind; the nine-fold Heaven’s all I hope to find. When’ll I from such toil my respite earn and return to the Tang court, merit done?*”

On hearing this, the woodcutter said, “Venerable Dad, please cast aside your worries. In less than a thousand miles on this main road to the West will be the Kingdom of India, the home of ultimate bliss.”

When he heard this, the elder at once dismounted and said, “We’ve caused you inconvenience to come this far. If that’s the main road before us, let me urge you to return to your house, brother woodcutter and thank your honoured mum for us for that sumptuous vegetarian repast. This humble cleric’s few tokens of gratitude to offer except the promise of reciting scriptures morning and evening on your behalf so that both of you, mum and son will be blessed with peace and long life of a century.” The woodcutter respectfully agreed and walked back while master and disciples headed straight for the West. Truly *the fiend subdued, they leave their hard ordeal; the kindness received, they journey with zeal.*

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The Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture offends Heaven and suffers drought; the Great Sage Sun advocates virtue and provides rain

*The Great Way’s hidden and deep – once told how it waxes and wanes will astonish both gods and spirits: enfolding the universe, cutting through one’s native light, ‘it grants the world true, matchless bliss. Before the Spirit Vulture Peak, the treasure pearl will blaze forth 5 kinds of radiance to illumine all life in the cosmos when taken out; those who know live long as mountains and seas.* <sup>2</sup>Tripitaka and his 3 disciples took leave of the woodcutter and descended the Mist-Concealing Mountain to proceed on the main road. After travelling for several days, they found themselves approaching a city.

“Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “can you see whether the city ahead of us is the Kingdom of India?”

“No! No!” replied Pilgrim, waving his hands. “Though the place of Siddhartha is named Ultimate Bliss, there is no city as such, only a large mountain in which there are terraces and towered buildings. The name there is the Great Thunderclap Monastery of the Spirit Mountain. Even if we’ve arrived at the Kingdom of India, it doesn’t mean that that’s where Siddhartha lives. Heaven knows how great a distance there is between the kingdom and the Spirit Mountain! The city over there, I suppose, must be some sort of outer prefecture of India but we’ll know more once we get near it.”

In a little while they reached the outside of the city. Dismounting, Tripitaka and his disciples walked through the triple gates. Inside they found little human activity, and the streets seemed rather desolate. When they reached the edge of the market, they saw many people wearing blue robes standing in rows left and right; a few who had on official caps and belts were standing beneath the eaves of a building. The four pilgrims proceeded along the street but the people would not step aside for them at all. As Bullseye 8 Rules had always been a country bumpkin, he stuck out his long horn and yelled, “Get out of the way! Get out of the way!”

When those people raised their heads and caught sight of a shape like that, they turned numb with fear and fell all over the place. “A monster-spirit’s here! A monster-spirit’s here!” they yelled. Trembling all over, those with official caps and belts saluted and said, “Where are you people from?”

Fearing that his disciples might cause trouble, Tripitaka immediately went to the front to answer the question. “This humble priest,” he said, “is the subject of the Great Tang in the Land of the East and has been sent to the Great Thunderclap Monastery in the Kingdom of India to seek scriptures from the Religious Patriarch. As we pass through your treasure region, we’ve yet to learn of your country’s name and seek shelter from a household. Having just entered the city, we fail to give right of way to others, and I beg you various officials to pardon us.”

One of the officials returned the greetings and said, “This is the outer prefecture of India, and the name of the region is Phoenix-Mortal. Because we’ve had a severe drought for several years, the prefect ordered us to put up here a public notice seeking a priest to pray for rain and save the people.”

On hearing this, Pilgrim said, “Where’s your notice?”

“Right here,” replied the officials. “We’ve been sweeping clean the wall and the eave just now, and we’ve yet to hang it up.”

“Bring it here and let me have a look,” said Pilgrim, and the various officials rolled out the notice at once and hung it beneath the eave. As Pilgrim and his companions drew near, this was the notice they found:

The Prefect Shangguan of the Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture in the Great Kingdom of India hereby promulgates a public notice to seek an enlightened master for the performance of a mighty religious deed. Though the territory of our prefecture is spacious, and though both our military and civilians have been affluent, we’ve suffered drought and famine for several consecutive years. The fields of the people are unploughed, and the military lands are infertile; the rivers have receded and the ditches have dried out. There is neither water in the wells nor liquid in the streams. The wealthy can barely subsist but the poor can hardly remain alive. A bushel of grain costs a hundred gold while five ounces of silver is the price of one bundle of wood. A ten-year-old girl is given in exchange for three pints of rice while a five-year-old boy is taken away at will. Those fearful of the law in the city would pawn their clothes and possessions to preserve themselves but those abusing the public in the countryside will rob and plunder to save their lives. For this reason we’ve promulgated this notice to plead with the worthy and wise of all quarters to pray for rain and save the people. Such kindness will be heavily rewarded with the payment of a thousand gold, and this is a sure promise.

After he had read it, Pilgrim asked the various officials, “What does the Prefect Shangguan<sup>3</sup> mean?”

“Shangguan happens to be his surname, and it’s also the name of our prefecture,” they replied. “But that’s quite a rare name,” said Pilgrim, chuckling.

“So Elder Brother hasn’t gone to school, after all!” 8 Rules said. “Don’t you know that toward the end of *The Book of a Hundred Family Names* there is the phrase, Shangguan Ouyang?”

“Disciples,” Tripitaka said, “let’s stop this idle chatter. Whichever one of you knows how to pray for rain should do so on their behalf in order to bring relief to the populace. This is a most virtuous deed. If you can’t, we’d leave and not delay our journey.”

“What’s so difficult about praying for rain?” said Pilgrim. “Old monkey can overturn rivers and seas, alter the course of the planets, topple Heaven and upturn a well, belch out fog and cloud, chase down the moon while carrying a mountain, call up the wind and the rain. Which one of these things in fact has not been the sport of my youth? There’s nothing to marvel at!”

When the various officials heard what he said, two of them quickly went to the prefectural office to report, “Venerable Dad, ten thousand happiness have arrived!”

The prefect was just in the midst of uttering a silent prayer before stalks of lighted incense. When he heard the announcement, he asked, “What happiness?” One of the officials replied, “Having received the public notice today, we’re about to mount it at the entrance of the market when four monks arrived. They claimed to be pilgrims sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to seek scriptures from God in the Great Thunderclap Monastery of the Kingdom of India. When they saw the notice, they also told us of their ability to pray for rain, and that is why we came especially to report to you.” The prefect immediately tidied his clothing and began walking toward the market, not even waiting for carriage or horses to be summoned, in order that he might solicit with great courtesy the help of these priests. When someone on the street announced, “The Venerable Dad Prefect has arrived,” the crowd stepped aside. As soon as he caught sight of the Tang Monk, the prefect started saluting low in the middle of the street, not intimidated at all by the hideous appearances of the monk’s disciples. “Your lowly official named Shangguan,” he said, “is the prefect of the Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture. With burned incense, and having ritually cleansed myself, I salute to implore the master to pray for rain and save the people. I beg the master to dispense widely his mercy, exercise his magic potency, and answer our needs!”

Returning his salutation, Tripitaka said, “This is hardly the place for conversation. Allow this humble cleric to reach a monastery or temple where it’ll be easier for us to do what we must do.”

“Let the master come to our humble residence,” said the prefect. “There will be an unsullied area for you to stay.”

Master and disciples thereupon led the horse and toted the luggage to the official residence. After he had greeted each one of them, the prefect at once ordered tea and a vegetarian meal to be served. When the food arrived in a little while, our 8 Rules ate with abandon like a hungry tiger, so terrifying those holding dishes and trays that their hearts quivered and their gallbladders shook. Back and forth they scurried about to fetch more soup and rice, moving like revolving lanterns. They could barely keep up with the demand but they did not stop until the pilgrims had satisfied themselves. After the meal, the Tang Monk expressed his thanks and then asked, “Sir Prefect, for how long has your noble region been afflicted with drought?”

The prefect said, *“At India’s Kingdom, this, our nation great, of Phoenix-Mortal I’m the magistrate. For three long years a drought has laid us low: the five grains perished – not even grass would grow! Commerce is hard for households big and small; ten doors or nine portals are tearful all. Two-thirds of us have been by hunger slain while one-third like a wind-blown torch remains. When I this public notice promulgate, it’s our luck that true monks have reached our state. If you with one inch of rain the people bless, a thousand gold I’ll give for such kindness.”*

On hearing this, Pilgrim showed great delight and said with a roar of laughter, “Don’t say that! Don’t say that! If you mention a thousand gold as repayment, you’ll not receive even half a drop of rain. But if you wish to accumulate merit and virtue, old monkey will present you with a torrential shower.”

That prefect was indeed an upright and honest official who had great love for his people. He immediately asked Pilgrim to take the honoured seat; he saluted low and said, “Master, if you’d indeed extend your mercy, this lowly official will never dare turn my back on virtue.”

“Let’s not talk anymore,” said Pilgrim, “and please rise. May I trouble you to take good care of my master, so that old monkey can act?”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “how will you act?”

“You and 8 Rules come over here,” replied Pilgrim. “Stand at the foot of the steps of the hall there and serve as my ritual assistants. Let old monkey summon the dragon here to make rain.” 8 Rules and Sand-monk obeyed; when the three of them all stood at the foot of the steps of the hall, the prefect burned incense and worshipped while Tripitaka sat and recited a *Thread*.

As Pilgrim recited a magic spell, immediately a dark cloud arose from the east and gradually drifted down to the courtyard in front of the hall; it was actually Aoguang, the old Dragon King of the Eastern Ocean. After the cloud had been retrieved, Aoguang took on human form and walked forward to salute Pilgrim saying, “In what capacity may this humble dragon serve the Great Sage who has summoned me?”

“Please rise,” said Pilgrim. “I’ve troubled you to come from a great distance only for one purpose, and that is to ask you why you’ve not provided rain to relieve a drought of several years here at the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal.”

“Let me humbly inform the Great Sage,” said the old dragon. “Though I may be able to make rain, I’m subject to the will of Heaven. If Heaven above has not authorized me, how could I dare come here to make rain?”

Pilgrim said, “Because I passed through this region and saw how the people suffered from such a prolonged drought, I asked you especially to come and bring relief. Why are you making excuses?”

“Would I dare do that?” said the dragon king. “When the Great Sage recited his magic spell, I’d never dare not show up. But I’ve not been authorized by Heaven in the first place, and, second, I’ve not brought along the divine warriors in charge of making rain. How could I start anything? If the Great Sage indeed has such eleemosynary intentions, allow this little dragon to return to the sea and summon his troops. Meanwhile, let the Great Sage make a memorial at the Celestial Palace and ask for an imperial decree authorizing the descent of rain. Request the aquatic officials to let loose the dragons, and then I’ll be able to make rain according to the amount specified by the decree.”

As Pilgrim could not quite controvert this proper argument that the old dragon offered, he had to let him return to the sea. He himself then jumped out of the star-treading pattern to give the Tang Monk a thorough account of what had happened. “In that case,” said the Tang Monk, “you may go and do your duty but you must not utter even a word of falsehood.” Pilgrim at once gave this injunction to 8 Rules and Sand-monk: “Guard the master, for I’m going up to the Celestial Palace.”

Dear Great Sage! He said he was leaving and at once vanished from sight. Quaking with fear, the prefect asked, “Where has Venerable Dad Sun gone to?”

"He mounted the clouds to ascend to Heaven," said 8 Rules, chuckling. The prefect became more respectful than ever. An order was hurriedly dispatched to the broad boulevards and narrow alleys, asking all the people – whether they be nobles or plebeians, civilian or military – to set up a placard for the dragon king in front of each household. Clean water jars with willow twigs stuck inside were to be placed by the doors, and incense was to be burned so that all could worship Heaven. Pilgrim reached the West Heaven Gate with a single cloud somersault. The Deity-King the Upholder of the Nation led a group of celestial soldiers and *vira* to greet him with the question: "Great Sage, have you completed the enterprise of scripture seeking?"

"The end can't be too far off," replied Pilgrim. "We've reached the border of the Kingdom of India where there is an outer prefecture by the name of Phoenix-Mortal. That place has not had rain for three years, and the people are in terrible straits. Old monkey wanted to pray for rain to bring relief but when I summoned the dragon king there, he claimed that he dared not do it on his own authority. I've come here, therefore, to request a decree from the Jade Emperor."

"I'm quite sure that rain is forbidden at that particular place," said the Deity-King, "For I've heard that the prefect's offended Heaven and Earth because of some mischief. As a punishment, the Jade Emperor established a rice mountain, a noodle mountain, and a huge square lock of gold. Until these three things are overturned, there will be no rain for the region."

Not knowing however, what the Deity-King was speaking of, Pilgrim insisted on an audience with the Jade Emperor. The Deity-King dared not bar his way, and he was permitted to go inside till he reached the Hall of Perfect Light. He was then met by the 4r Celestial Masters who asked, "What's the Great Sage doing here?"

"While escorting the Tang Monk," said Pilgrim, "I arrived at the border of the Kingdom of India. Because of a severe drought at the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal, the prefect sought magicians to make rain. When old monkey managed to summon the dragon king and ask him to make rain, he said that he dared not do it without the explicit decree of the Jade Emperor. Hence I've come to request a decree to relieve the people's suffering."

"But it should not rain at that region," said the Celestial Masters.

With a laugh, Pilgrim said, "Whether it should or not, please announce my presence and see whether old monkey can win this favour."

The Mortal Ge said, "As the proverb has it, 'A fly wraps around a net – what a large countenance!'"4 "Stop this babbling!" said Xu Jingyang. "Let's take him inside." Thereupon Qiu Hongzhi, Zhang Daoling, Ge, and Xu – these four realised mortals – led the visitor into the Hall of Divine Mists to memorialise, saying, "Your Majesty, we've here Sun Wukong who is passing through the Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture of the Kingdom of India. Wishing rain for the people, he has come especially to seek your decree."

"On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month three years ago," said the Jade Emperor, "we're out on tour to inspect the myriad heavens and float through the Three Realms. When we arrived at that particular region, we'd occasion to witness that Shangguan right in the midst of his wickedness. He pushed over the sacrificial maigre intended for offering to Heaven and fed it to dogs instead. Furthermore, he even made obscene utterances and committed the sin of blasphemy. For this reason, we established three things in the Fragrance-Draping Hall, to which all of you'd lead Sun Wukong to see. If these things have been overturned, we'll grant him a decree; if not, he should be told to mind his own business."

The four Celestial Masters at once led Pilgrim to the hall to look around. There they came upon a mountain of rice, about one hundred feet tall, and a mountain of noodles, about two hundred feet in height. At the side of the rice mountain was a chicken no larger than a human fist that was pecking at the rice at a rather irregular pace – now speeding up, now slowing down. Over at the noodle mountain was a golden-haired puppy, a Peking pug that with an occasional flick of his tongue, was lapping up some of the noodles. On the left side of the hall, moreover, there was an iron rack with a large square lock, at least fifteen inches in length, hanging from it. Beneath the key of the lock, no thicker than a human finger, was a small lamp, its tiny flame barely touching the key.

Not knowing what to make of the sight, Pilgrim turned to ask the Celestial Masters, "What does this mean?"

1 of them replied, "Because that fellow's offended Heaven, the Jade Emperor established these three things. Not until the chicken's finished pecking the rice, the dog's lapped up all the noodles, and the lamp's burned through the key of the lock there'll be rain in that region."

When he heard these words, Pilgrim was so taken aback that he paled with fright. Not daring to present another memorial to the Emperor, he walked out of the hall, visibly embarrassed. "The Great Sage needn't be overly perplexed," said 1 of the preceptors. "This affair can only be resolved by virtue for if there is a single thought of kindness and mercy to stir up Heaven above, the rice and noodle mountains will topple immediately and the lock key too will snap at once. You must go and persuade that prefect to do good and blessing will be on its way."

Pilgrim agreed. *Not taking leave of the Jade Emperor at Divine Mists, he went straightaway below to answer a mortal man.* In a moment he arrived at the West Heaven Gate where he saw Deity-King the Upholder of the Nation again. "Did you succeed in getting a decree?" asked the Deity-King.

Having given an account of the matter of the rice mountain, the noodle mountain, and the golden lock, Pilgrim said, "He did refuse to grant me a decree, as you told me he would. But when the Celestial Masters sent me off just now, they also instructed me to persuade that fellow to return to virtue, and blessing would come to him as before." Thus they parted, and Pilgrim descended on a cloud to the Region Below.

When he arrived, the prefect, Tripitaka, 8 Rules, Sand-monk, and all the officials, great and small, crowded around him to question him about his journey. Pilgrim singled out the prefect and bellowed at him, "Because you offended Heaven and Earth three years ago, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, you brought a great ordeal on your people, for Heaven now refuses to grant you rain." These words so astonished the prefect that he fell salute on the ground, asking, "How did the master learn of the incident three years ago?"

"How could you," said Pilgrim, "push down sacrificial maigre intended for offering to Heaven and feed it to dogs? You'd better give us an honest account!"

Not daring to conceal anything, the prefect said, "On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month three years ago, we indeed offered sacrificial maigre to Heaven in our residence. Because of my wife's ill behaviour – she taunted me, in fact with some nasty words – I was shortly blinded by anger and pushed down the votive table, spilling all the vegetarian food. At that point I did in fact get the dogs to come and eat it up. Since then this incident has lingered in my memory and often driven me to distraction but I know of no way to present an explanation. I'd not realised that Heaven above took offence and brought harm to the people on my account. Now that the master has descended again to this region, I beg you to reveal to me how Heaven intends to reckon with me."

Pilgrim said, "That day happened to be the epiphany of the Jade Emperor to the Region Below. When he saw you feeding the sacrificial maigre to dogs and mouthing obscene words, he at once set up three things as reminders of your transgression."

"What three things?" asked 8 Rules.

"At the Fragrance-Draping Hall," replied Pilgrim, "a rice mountain approximately one hundred feet tall and a noodle mountain about two hundred feet in height were set up. By the rice mountain there was a chicken no larger than a fist, pecking away rather leisurely at the rice. At the noodle mountain there was a golden-haired Peking pug, lapping up some of the noodles with an occasional flick of his tongue. On the left side of the hall, moreover, there was an iron rack with a huge lock made of yellow gold hanging from it, its key as thick as a finger. Below the key is a lamp but the flame is barely touching the key. Not until the chicken has finished pecking the rice, the dog lapping up the noodles, and the lamp burning through the key is there to be rain in this region."

Chuckling, 8 Rules said, "No problem! No problem! If Elder Brother is willing to take me there, I'll undergo magical transformation and finish off all that rice and noodle in a single meal. We'll break the key, too, and there'll be rain."

"Stop babbling, Idiot!" said Pilgrim. "This happens to be a device of Heaven. How could you undo it?"

"In that case," said Tripitaka, "what shall we do?"

"It's not too difficult! It's not too difficult!" said Pilgrim. "When I was about to come back, the Four Celestial Masters told me that this matter could be resolved only by doing good."

Saluting himself on the ground, the prefect pleaded, "I beg the master to inform me. This lowly official will obey all your instructions."

"If you indeed repent and return to virtue," said Pilgrim, "and make it your early practice to worship God and read scriptures, I'll see what I can do for you. But if you refuse to change, even I can't undo your miseries. Before long Heaven will decree your execution, and your life will not be spared."

Touching his head to the ground, the prefect vowed that he would submit to religion. At once he gave the order for Religious and Daoist clerics of his region to begin performing services for three days, about which they had to write up detailed documents, burn them, and send them to Heaven above. The prefect himself personally led his subjects in worship and in the presentation of incense in order to appease Heaven and Earth and do penance. Tripitaka, too, also recited *Threads* for him. In the meantime, another order was dispatched with all speed to every household within and without the city: each man and woman was to burn incense and recite the name of God. From that moment on the sound of good works could be heard everywhere.

Highly pleased by what he saw and heard, Pilgrim said to 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "The two of you'd take care to guard our master. Let old monkey make another trip for him."

"Elder Brother," asked 8 Rules, "where do you want to go this time?"

"Since this prefect has believed the words of old monkey," replied Pilgrim, "and has received indeed our teachings, and since he is now reciting the name of God with due reverence, compassion, and sincerity, I'll go again to memorialise to the Jade Emperor and beg some rain for him."

"If you wish to go, Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "you need not hesitate so that our journey will not be delayed. Do finish this rain service for them in order that our right fruit, too, may be perfected."

Dear Great Sage! Mounting the clouds, he reached the Heaven Gate where he was greeted by the question of Deity-King The Upholder of the Nation, "Why are you here again?"

"That prefect," replied Pilgrim, "has already returned to virtue." The Deity-King, too, was delighted. As they conversed, they saw the Messenger of Direct Talismans arrive, holding Daoist documents and Religious rescripts to be sent through the Heaven Gate. When the messenger saw Pilgrim, he saluted him, saying, "This is the merit of the Great Sage in his evangelical work."

"Where are you sending these documents?" asked Pilgrim.

"To the Hall of Perfect Light," replied the messenger, "so that the Celestial Masters may present them before the Jade Emperor, the Great Celestial Honoured One."

"In that case," Pilgrim said, "you walk ahead, and I'll follow you."

As the talismans messenger entered the gate, Deity-King the Upholder of the Nation said, "Great Sage, there's no need for you to have an audience with the Jade Emperor. You need only to go to the Bureau of Appointed Seasons of the 9-fold Heaven and ask for the thunder deities. When you've started the thunder and lightning, rain will be on its way."

Indeed Pilgrim followed his advice; after entering the Heaven Gate, he did not proceed to seek another decree at the Hall of Divine Mists. Instead, turning his step on the clouds, he went straight to the Bureau of Appointed Seasons of the 9-fold Heaven. He was met by the Thunder Gate Messenger, the Recorder of Collective Registry, and the Recorder of the Provincial Judicial Commission who saluted him and asked, "To what do we owe this visit, Great Sage?"

"There's something," replied Pilgrim, "for which I must have an audience with the Celestial Worthy." The three messengers at once went in to make the announcement, and the Celestial Worthy walked out from behind the royal cinnabar screen adorned with nine phoenixes. After having tidied his attire, he met his visitor. When they had finished their exchange of greetings, Pilgrim said, "I've come with a special request."

"What is it?" asked the Celestial Worthy. Pilgrim said, "I escorted the Tang Monk to the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal. When he saw how severe a drought they have been having, I promised the people that I'd seek rain on their behalf. Now I've come specially to request the assistance of your officers to go there and provide thunder."

"I happen to know that the prefect's offended Heaven," said the Celestial Worthy, "as a result of which three conditions have been established. I wonder if it'd rain in that region."

Pilgrim said, "Yesterday I went to request a decree from the Jade Emperor and he told the Celestial Masters to lead me to the Fragrance-Draping Hall to look at those three conditions. They're actually a rice mountain, a noodle mountain, and a golden lock. The condition's that only when the mountains topple and the key snaps would there be rain. I was deeply troubled by the difficulty of meeting these conditions but the Celestial Masters instructed me to go and persuade the prefect and his subjects to do good. Their idea was that *when man has a virtuous thought, heaven will grant him support*. They assured me in fact that the works of virtue would alter the Mind of Heaven and bring deliverance to the people's suffering. Now that a virtuous thought's indeed sprung up in the prefect and the sound of virtue can be heard everywhere in that region, the Messenger of Direct Talismans has already reported to the Jade Emperor with documents recording such deeds of repentance and penance. That is the reason old monkey has come to your honoured residence to request the assistance of your thunder officials."

"In that case," said the Celestial Worthy, "I'll send the Squires of Thunder – Deng, Xin, Zhang, and Tao – who'll lead the Mum of Lightning to follow the Great Sage to the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal to sound the thunder."

In a little while, the four warriors, on arriving at the region of Phoenix-Mortal with the Great Sage, immediately began to exercise their magic in mid-air. All you'd hear were powerful peals of thunder, and all you'd see were blinding flashes of lightning. Truly *electric flash like purple-gold snake and thunder like all creatures aroused. Blaze are the flying flames; the cracks topple mountain caves. The lightning lights up the heavens; the tumult unhinges the earth. 1 scarlet gold flash the seedlings quickens; a whole, large empire is rocked and shaken.* For 3 full years, the people at the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal, regardless of whether they were civilians or military personnel, or whether they lived inside or outside of the city, had not heard the sound of thunder. When they encountered both thunder and lightning this day, all of them fell to their knees. Some of them held up incense braziers on their heads while others picked up willow twigs; all of them recited, "I submit to the Infinite Light! I submit to the Infinite Light!" Such a cry of virtue indeed alerted Heaven above just as the ancient poem said:

*One wish born in the heart of man's known throughout Heaven and Earth.*

*If vice or virtue lacks reward, unjust must be the universe.*

The Great Sage directed the deities who were producing thunder and lightning at the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal. The Messenger of Direct Talismans in the Region Above escorted the documents of both Religious and Daoists up to the Hall of Perfect Light. They were then taken by the 4 Celestial Masters to present to the Jade Emperor. The Emperor said, “If those fellows down there’ve turned their thoughts to good, we’d take a look at the three conditions.”

Even as he was speaking, a guard from the Fragrance-Draping Hall arrived to make this report: “Not only have the rice and noodle mountains toppled but all have vanished in an instant. The key to the lock’s also broken.”

No sooner had he finished this memorial when a celestial court attendant arrived, leading the local spirit, the city deity, and the spirits of land and grain at the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal. All the gods saluted to the Jade Emperor and memorialised, “The prefect and the entire population of our region have repented. There isn’t a single household, indeed not a single person that’s not embraced the fruit of virtue by worshipping God and revering Heaven. We beg you now therefore to extend your mercy and let the sweet dew descend to succour the people.”

Filled with delight by what he heard, the Jade Emperor at once issued this decree: “Let the Bureau of Wind, the Bureau of Clouds, and the Bureau of Rain follow our instruction to go to the Region Below. Within the territory of the Prefecture of Phoenix-Mortal at this day and hour, let them sound the thunder, deploy the clouds, and lower three feet and forty-two drops of rain.”

The 4 Celestial Masters transmitted this decree to the various bureaus, the deities of which all roused themselves to exercise their divine power in the world below. Pilgrim and the thunder gods meanwhile were telling the Mum of Lightning to ply her tricks in mid-air when they were joined by the other arriving deities. In no time at all, clouds and wind came together and sweet rain descended in torrents. *Marvellous rain! Endless dense clouds, boundless black fog, thunder cracking, lightning flashing, violent wind churning, sudden rain pouring. This is how 1 thought could move Heaven and all people realise their hopes. Since the Great Sage has caused decisive change, the empire grows dark for 10000 miles – a good rain likes seas and rivers upturned, obscuring land and sky. A cascade hangs before the eaves and chimes resound beyond the screens. In every door people recite a god’s name and water runs wild through 6 streets and marts. Rivers are filled to the brim east and west; streams are flowing freely both north and south. Shrivelled sprouts are moistened; withered woods now revive. In the fields hemp and wheat flourish; in the village grains and beans increase. The traders find joy in commerce; the farmers once more love their ploughing. From henceforth millet and grain will prosper, their tillage yield naturally rich harvests. With rain and wind in season the people rest and in calm seas and rivers enjoy peace.* In a single day there descended the full measure of 3 feet and 42 drops of rain. As the various deities gradually halted their activities, the Great Sage cried out in a loud voice: “Let the deities of the Four Bureaus temporarily stay their cloudy attendants. Allow old monkey to go ask the prefect to make his proper expression of thanks. All of you can then sweep aside the mist and cloud to reveal your true forms. When these common mortals have seen you with their own eyes, they’ll then believe and sacrifice to you with constancy.” On hearing this, the gods had no choice but to remain in mid-air. Lowering the direction of his cloud, Pilgrim went to the prefecture where he was met by Tripitaka, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk. The prefect made a salute with each step he took to express his gratitude. “You’d not thank me,” said Pilgrim, “but I’ve managed to detain the deities of the Four Bureaus here for the moment. Assemble many of your people quickly and thank them so that they’ll return in the future to grant you rain.” The prefect accordingly sent out an immediate dispatch to all the people that they should hold lighted incense and salute the sky. When the mist and clouds moved apart, what the people saw were the revealed true forms of the deities of the Four Bureaus, these being the Rain Bureau, the Thunder Bureau, the Cloud Bureau, and the Wind Bureau. This was what they saw: *the dragon king’s revealed form, the thunder-god’s exposed body. The Cloud-Boy’s appearance, the Earl of Wind’s true image. The dragon king’s revealed form: such silver beard and hoary face matchless in the world. The thunder-god’s exposed body: such incomparable hooked mouth and forceful mien. The Cloud-Boy’s appearance: who’d rival his jade-like face and head of gold? The Earl of Wind’s true image: who resembles his round eyes and bushy brows? Jointly they emerge in the blue heavens, each showing in turn his holy presence. Phoenix-Mortal people then believe; worship with incense, and their evils leave. Once they have seen Heaven’s warriors this day, they cleanse their hearts and virtue now obey.* The various deities lingered for an hour, and the people did not cease in their worship. Pilgrim Sun rose again into the air to salute them saying, “We’ve troubled you! We’ve troubled you! Please return to your bureaus, all of you. Old monkey will make certain that the households in this prefecture are faithful in their offerings and make oblation in due season to thank you. From now on, please return every fifth day to give the people wind and every tenth day to give them rain. Do come back, all of you and vouchsafe your salvation to them.” The deities agreed and all returned to their bureaus. The Great Sage dropped down from the clouds and said to Tripitaka, “Our affair’s concluded and the people are safe. We can pack and move on.”

On hearing this, the prefect quickly saluted them saying, “How’d you say that, Venerable Dad Sun? What you’ve accomplished here’re kindness and merit without limits. This lowly official’s already asked for a small banquet to be prepared as a token of our gratitude for your great kindness. We intend also to buy some land from the people so that we may build a monastery in truth to establish a living shrine to you. Your names will be inscribed on steles so that you may enjoy our offerings in all four seasons. But even if I were to engrave your deed on my bones and carve it on my heart, I’d not repay a fraction of your kindness. How can you say then that you want to leave?”

“Though you may find it appropriate to say what you said, Your Excellency,” said Tripitaka, “you must realise also that we’re but mendicants journeying to the West. We daren’t stay long. In a day or two we’ll certainly leave.” The prefect of course would not let them go. He gave the order that preparations for the banquet be made immediately and also that work begin that very night for the building of the shrine. The next day a grand banquet was given in which the Tang Monk was asked to take the honoured seat. The Great Sage Sun, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk all had their own tables while the prefect and his subordinates, high and low officials, all took turns to present food and drinks to the accompaniment of fine poems. The entertainment lasted one whole day, and it was a delightful occasion indeed for which a testimonial poem says:

*After a long drought the fields meet sweet rain. Commerce and rivers freely flow again.  
We’ve to thank the divine monks’ advent and the Great Sage who to Heaven’s Palace went.  
3 things of former evil now undone, 1 thought’s contrite fruits of virtue won.  
Henceforth may it ever be like Yao-Shun times: rich harvests and rains due in all four climes.*

There was a party 1 day and banquet the next – it went on like that for almost half a month during which time they were also waiting for the monastery to be built and the living shrine to be finished. 1 day the prefect asked the four pilgrims to go look at the building. “It’s an enormous labour,” said an astonished Tang Monk. “How can you get it finished so quickly?”

“This lowly official’s,” replied the prefect, “ordered the labourers to work night and day in order that they might complete their task speedily. Now I’m inviting the Venerable Dads especially to go see it.”

“You’re indeed a worthy prefect,” said Pilgrim with a smile, “one who’s not only virtue but ability as well!” They thus went to the new monastery. When they saw the towering edifices and the magnificent gates, they were full of praise. Pilgrim then requested his master, “Name the monastery, please, master.”

Tripitaka said, “Yes, let’s call it the Monastery of Salvific Rain.”

“Very good! Very good!” exclaimed the prefect. Brushed gold notices were then set up to recruit qualified priests to attend the fires and incense. On the left of the main hall, living shrines were erected to the 4 pilgrims at which offerings would be made in all four seasons. There were plans also to build shrines to the thunder deities and dragon deities as tokens of gratitude for their divine works. After witnessing all of this, the pilgrims decided to leave. Knowing that their benefactors could no longer be detained, the populace of the entire prefecture came with gifts and cash but not even a penny was accepted. Thereupon the officials and the civilians of the entire region formed a huge entourage with the waving of banners and the beating of drums, to escort the pilgrims out of the city. Even after some 30 miles they could not quite bring themselves to part with the pilgrims whom they escorted yet another distance with tearful eyes. Only when the pilgrims disappeared from sight did the people turn back. Thus it is that a *virtuous divine monk leaves Salvation behind; the Great Sage Equal to Heaven spreads his kindness wide.*

## 104

### Chan convenes an assembly reaching Jade-Flower; Mind Monkey, Wood, and Earth instruct disciples

The Tang Monk took leave of the prefect. Riding along, he spoke most amiably to Pilgrim: “Worthy disciple, your virtuous fruit this time far surpasses even that of the occasion when you rescued the children of the Beggar Kingdom. This is entirely your merit!”

“At the Beggar Kingdom,” said Sand-monk, “eleven hundred and eleven young boys were saved. How can that compare with this torrential rain that provided moisture everywhere and revived hundreds and thousands of lives? This disciple’s been secretly admiring Elder Brother, too for his great magic strength that can move Heaven and compassion that covers the Earth.”

With a giggle, 8 Rules said, “Yes, Elder Brother’s kindness and virtue! Unfortunately he practices benevolence and righteousness only on the outside and harbours malicious designs within. Whenever he walks with old bull, he steps on people!”

“When did I ever step on you?” asked Pilgrim.

“Enough! Enough!” said 8 Rules. “Frequently you took care to see that I was bound, that I was hung up, that I was cooked, that I was steamed! Since you’ve extended your kindness and mercy to hundreds and thousands of people at the Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture, you’d have stayed there at least half a year. That way I’d have been able to enjoy a few leisurely meals, eating my fill. But all you did was hurry us on our way!”

On hearing this, the elder snapped at him, “This Idiot! All you can think of is something to stuff down your throat! Get moving quickly and don’t you dare talk back!”

Not daring to utter a word, 8 Rules pouted a little; he toted the luggage and guffawed a few times as master and disciples headed down the main road. Time went by like a weaver’s shuttle and soon it was late autumn. See *water lines recede, mountain rocks turn bare. Red leaves flutter about, a time of yellow blossoms. The frost glows, one feels the night lengthen; the white moon pierces the paper screens. Fire and smoke in all households, the twilight’s long; the lake surfaces a cold gleam everywhere. Fragrant white duckweeds and dense red smartweeds. Yellow, green oranges, droopy willows and handsome grains. The wild geese drop by a hamlet midst rush like snow; soybeans are reaped as the inn’s roosters crow.* After the 4 of them had journeyed for a long time, they again saw the shadow of city walls looming. Lifting his crop to point toward the distance, the elder called out: “Wukong, look! There’s another city over there. I wonder what sort of a place it’s?”

“You and I’ve not even reached it,” said Pilgrim. “How’d we know? Let’s go up there and ask some people.”

Just as he finished speaking, an old man walked out from a clump of trees. Holding a bamboo staff in his hands, he wore a light garment on his body, a pair of coir sandals on his feet, and a thin belt around his waist. The Tang Monk was so startled that he rolled down from his saddle at once, walked up to him, and saluted him. Leaning on his staff, the old man returned his greetings and asked, “Where’ve you come from, Elder?”

Pressing his palms together in front of him, the Tang Monk said, “This humble cleric is someone sent by the Tang court in the Land of the East to Thunderclap to seek scriptures from God. Arriving at your treasure region, I see a rampart ahead of us. Since I don’t know what place it is, I ask the old patron especially for instruction.”

On hearing this, the old man exclaimed, “A Chan Master who possesses the Way! Our humble region here happens to be the lower prefecture of the Kingdom of India. The name of this place is the Jade-Flower District. As the county magistrate is a member of the royal household of the King of India, he has been appointed the Jade-Flower Prince. He is a most virtuous ruler, one who pays special reverence to Religious and Daoists and loves the common people dearly. If the old Chan Master goes to have an audience with him, he will undoubtedly grant you special honour.” Tripitaka thanked him, and the old man left by walking through the forest.

Then Tripitaka turned to give a thorough account to his three disciples who were all delighted and tried to help their master to mount. “It’s not too far,” said Tripitaka. “I need not ride the horse.” The four of them, therefore, walked up to the city streets to look around. Most of the households over there were busily engaged in buying and selling. The place seemed to be densely populated, and business too seemed to be flourishing. Listen to their voices and look at their features: they seem no different from those of China. “Disciples,” admonished Tripitaka, “do be careful and don’t be rowdy.”

8 Rules at once lowered his head and Sand-monk put a hand over his face. Pilgrim however, took his master’s arm to give him support, and soon people on both sides began to crowd them, vying to take a look at these strange travellers. “We’ve here noble priests who can tame dragons and subdue tigers,” they cried, “but we’ve never seen such bull-taming and monkey-subduing monks!”

Unable to contain himself, 8 Rules stuck out his horn and said, “Have you ever seen a bull-taming king of a priest?” He so frightened those people on the street that they stumbled and fell, scattering right and left. “Idiot,” said Pilgrim, laughing, “hide your horn quickly. Stop being so histrionic, and watch your steps. You’re about to cross a bridge.” Lowering his head, Idiot kept giggling as they crossed the drawbridge to enter the city gates. On the big boulevards they could see many juice shops and poem-houses, all prospering and bustling in activities. It was indeed a capital city right out of China for which a testimonial poem says:

*A royal city and fortress ever strong where all things seem fresh near hills and rivers long.  
The marts with 100 goods the lake-boats ply; to sell juice 1000 shops their banners fly.  
On each tower and terrace the people bustle; in every street and lane the traders hustle.  
This scene’s as lovely as that of Chang’an’s fame: roosters crow, dogs bark – they all sound the same.*

Secretly delighted, Tripitaka thought to himself, “I’ve heard people speaking of the various barbarians in the Western Territories but I’ve never been here. When I look carefully at the place however, I find that it’s no different from our Great Tang. It certainly lives up to its name of Ultimate Bliss!”

He overheard moreover that a picul of white rice cost no more than 4 mace of silver and a mere penny would fetch a catty of sesame oil. It was truly a region blessed with bountiful harvests of the 5 grains. They walked for a long time before they reached the residence of the Jade-Flower Prince. On both sides of the residence, there were also the residence of the Administrator of a Princely

Establishment, the Investigative Hall, the Refectory, and the Guest Hostel. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, "this is the royal residence. Let me go in to have an audience with the prince and have our rescript certified."

"If Master is going inside," said 8 Rules, "should we stand in front of this official residence?"

"Don't you see the sign on the door here?" replied Tripitaka. "It says 'Guest Hostel.' You may enter and take a seat inside. Find some hay to feed our horse. After I've seen the prince, and if he bestows some food on us, I'll call you to share it with me."

"You may go in without worry, Master," said Pilgrim. "Old monkey will take care of things."

Sand-monk then toted the luggage into the hostel. When the attendants inside saw how hideous they looked, they dared not question the visitors, nor were they bold enough to ask them to leave. They had in fact to permit the pilgrims to sit down. The old master changed his attire, took up the travel rescript, and went to the royal residence. He was met by a protocol officer who asked, "Where's the elder come from?"

Tripitaka answered, "I'm a priest sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to seek scriptures from the Religious Patriarch at the Great Thunderclap. Having arrived at your treasure region, I'd like to have my travel rescript certified, and that is why I've come especially to have an audience with His Highness." The protocol officer immediately announced his arrival.

The prince who was indeed an upright and knowledgeable person, at once asked his visitor to enter. After Tripitaka had saluted him at the foot of the steps to the main hall, the prince invited him to take a seat inside. Tripitaka then presented the rescript. When the prince read it and noticed the seals of various kingdoms and their rulers' signatures, he too applied the treasure seal amiably and affixed his own signature. Folding it up again and placing it on the desk, the prince asked, "Elder National Preceptor, I see you've gone through many nations. Exactly how far is it from your Great Tang to this place?"

"This humble cleric does not quite remember the exact distance," replied Tripitaka. "Years ago however, the Nun Guanyin revealed herself to our emperor and left his line of the verse: 'The way: a hundred and eight thousand miles.'<sup>1</sup> On his journey, this humble cleric has already gone through fourteen summers and winters."

"That means fourteen years!" said the prince with a smile. "You must have had some delays on the way, I suppose."

"I can't even give you a brief account of them – those ten thousand beasts and a thousand demons!" replied Tripitaka. "You've no idea, Your Highness, how much I've suffered before reaching your treasure region." Highly pleased, the prince immediately asked the royal chef to prepare a vegetarian meal for his visitor.

"Your Highness," said Tripitaka again. "This humble cleric has three disciples waiting outside. I dare not receive the maigre, for I fear that our journey might be delayed." The prince said to the court attendant, "Go quickly to invite the three disciples of the elder to come in and have a meal."

The officer went out with the invitation but he was greeted by the remark: "We've not see them! We've not seen them!" Then one of the followers said, "There are three ugly priests sitting in the Guest Hostel. They must be the ones." The court attendant went with his followers to the hostel and asked the official in charge, "Which ones are the noble disciples of the scripture-seeking priest of the Great Tang? Our lord has commanded that they be invited for a meal."

8 Rules was just seated there, dozing. The moment he heard the word *meal* he could not refrain from leaping up and replying, "We're the ones! We're the ones!" The sight of him so terrified the court attendant that he screamed, shaking all over, "It's a bull-demon! A bull-demon!"

When Pilgrim heard the commotion, he tugged at 8 Rules and said, "Brother, try to be a little more civilised, and stop being such a village brute!" When those officials saw Pilgrim, they cried, "It's a monkey-spirit! A monkey-spirit!"

Folding his hands in his sleeve before his chest, Sand-monk said, "Please do not be frightened, all of you! We three are all disciples of the Tang Monk." On seeing him, the various officials all cried, "A god of the hearth! A god of the hearth!" Pilgrim Sun then asked 8 Rules to lead the horse and Sand-monk to tote the luggage so that they could all enter the Jade-Flower Royal Residence. The court attendant meanwhile went ahead to announce their arrival. When the prince's eyes beheld such ugliness, he, too, became quite frightened. Pressing his palms together, Tripitaka said, "Please have no fear, Your Highness. Though my disciples look ugly, they are all goodhearted." 8 Rules walked forward and salute, saying, "This humble cleric salutes you!" The prince grew even more apprehensive.

"My disciples," Tripitaka said again, "were all recruited from the wilds. They are untutored in proper etiquette, and I beg you to forgive them." Suppressing his fear, the prince told the royal chef to take the monks to the Gauze-Drying Pavilion for the vegetarian meal. After thanking him, Tripitaka left the prince and went with his disciples to the pavilion where he immediately scolded 8 Rules. "You coolie!" he said. "You've no manners at all! You'd have kept your mouth shut, and that would have been all right. How could you be so rude! One word, and you nearly knocked down the T'ai Mountain!"

"It's a good thing I neither spoke nor saluted," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "I've managed to save some energy!"

"He'd have waited for us to salute together," said Sand-monk. "Instead, he went ahead and started hollering with his horn jutting!"

"What a fuss! What a fuss!" said 8 Rules. "You told me some days ago, Master that I'd salute and make a salutation when I met someone. I did that today and you say now that it's no good. What I'm supposed to do?"

"I told you to salute and greet people," said Tripitaka, "but I didn't tell you to fool with the prince! As the proverb says, *there're different kinds of things and different grades of people*. How'd you not distinguish between the noble and the lowly?"

As they spoke, the royal chef led the servants to spread out tables and chairs and serve the maigre. Master and disciples stopped talking as each ate his meal. Instead about the prince who left the main hall and went inside the palace. When his 3 young princes saw how pale he looked, they asked, "Why does Dad King seem so frightened today?"

The prince said, "Just now there was a priest sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to seek scriptures from God. He came to have his travel rescript certified, and he seemed a rather comely person. When I asked him to stay for a meal, he told me that he had disciples waiting in front of our residence. I ordered them invited also but when they came in after a little while, they did not pay me the respect of performing the grand ceremony. All they did was salute and I was already displeased. But when I managed to take a look at them, each one was ugly as a monstrous demon. I grew quite frightened, and that's why I look pale." Now those three young princes were quite different from other people, for each of them was fond of martial arts. So they rolled up their sleeves at once and clenched their fists, saying, "Could these be monster-spirits from the mountain who have assumed human forms? Let us take our weapons out and have a look!"

Dear princes! The eldest took up a rod tall as his eyebrows; the second wielded a nine-pronged rake; and the third picked up a staff coated with black enamel. In big heroic strides, they walked out of the palace and shouted, "Who are the monks seeking scriptures? Where are they?" The chef and other officials all went to their knees and said, "Young princes, they are having their vegetarian meal at the Gauze-Drying Pavilion."

Without regard for good or ill, the young princes barged right in and bellowed: "Are you fiends or humans? Speak up quickly, and we'll spare your lives." Tripitaka was so terrified that he paled with fright. Abandoning his rice bowl, he stood saluting and said, "Your humble cleric is someone sent by the Tang court to seek scriptures. I'm a human, not a fiend."

"You seem like a human all right," said one of the princes, "but those three hideous ones have to be fiends!" 8 Rules kept right on gorging himself with rice and refused to pay them any attention. Sand-monk and Pilgrim however, rose slightly and said, "We too are humans. Our features may seem ugly but our hearts are good; our bodies may seem cumbersome but our natures are kind. Where have you three come from? Why are you so brash with your words?"

The royal chef, standing at their side, said, "These three are our prince's heirs." Dropping down his bowl, 8 Rules said, "Your Highnesses, why are you each holding your weapon? Could it be that you want to fight with us?"

The second prince strode forward and raised his rake with both hands, about to strike 8 Rules. "That rake of yours," said 8 Rules, giggling loudly, "only deserves to be the grandson of *my* rake!" He at once lifted up his garment and took out his own rake from his waist. One wave of it and there were ten thousand shafts of golden light; he moved it a few times and there were a thousand strands of auspicious air. The prince was so terrified that his hands weakened and his tendons turned numb; he did not dare wield his own weapon any further.

When Pilgrim saw the eldest using a rod and hopping about, he took out from his ear the golden-hooped rod. One wave of it and it had the thickness of a rice bowl and the length of about thirteen feet. He gave the ground a stab with it and it went in about three feet. As it stood there, Pilgrim said with a chuckle, "Allow me to present you with this rod of mine!" When he heard that, the prince threw away his own rod and went to take hold of the other. He used all his strength to try to pull it out of the ground but he could not move it one whit. He then tried to give it a shove and a shake but it remained there as if it had taken root.

Growing impatient, the third prince attacked with his black-enameled staff, only to be brushed aside with one hand by Sand-monk. With his other, Sand-monk took out his fiend-routing staff, and with a little twirl it created luminous colours and radiant mists. The royal chef and other officials were struck dumb and numb with fright while the three young princes all knelt down and said, "Divine masters! Divine masters! Being mortals we didn't recognise you. We beg you to show us your abilities, so that we may honour you as our teachers." Walking forward, Pilgrim lifted up his own rod with no effort at all and said, "It's too cramped here. I can't stretch my hands. Let me leap into the air and show you a little of how the rod should be used."

Marvellous Great Sage! With a loud whistle he somersaulted right up into mid-air, his two feet treading the auspicious cloud of five colours. At about three hundred paces above ground, he let loose his rod to make Sprinkling Flowers over the Top<sup>2</sup> and the Yellow Dragon Entwining the Body. Up and down he moved, circling left and right. In the beginning his person and the rod so complemented each other that they seemed, as the adage had it, like flowers added to brocade. By and by even the person disappeared, and all one could see was a sky full of twirling rods!

Shouting a "Bravo!" down below, 8 Rules could not contain himself any longer. "Let Old bull go and sport a little too!" he cried. Dear Idiot! Mounting on a gust of wind, he rose also to mid-air and let loose his rake: three strokes up and four down, five strokes left and six strokes right, seven strokes in front and eight behind. All these bodily movements made one hear only a loud continuous swish. When the performance reached its most exciting moment, Sand-monk said to the elder, "Master, let old Sand go also and exercise!"

Dear Monk! With one leap he, too, rose into the air and wielded his staff. Now an ardent fighter swathed in golden radiance, he used both hands to make with his staff the Scarlet Phoenix Facing the Sun and the Hungry Tiger Leaping on its Prey. A tight parry and a slow block were followed by swift turns and quick lunges. The three brothers thus made a tremendous display of their magic potency, showing off their prowess and martial ability in mid-air. Thus it is that *the image of true Chan's no common view: the Great Way's causes<sup>3</sup> the cosmos imbue. In power Gold and Wood fill the religion-sphere; tossing Spatula and Ubiquity<sup>4</sup> cohere. At all times divine arms can their might lay bare; elixir vessels are honoured everywhere. Though India's lofty, one must nature coerce; Jade-Flower princes all to the Mean reverse.*<sup>5</sup> So astounded were the 3 young princes that they went to their knees in the dust. Those officials, of high rank or low, around the Gauze-Drying Pavilion, the old prince in the royal residence, and the entire population of the city – whether military or civilian, male or female, Religious monks or nuns, Daoist clergy or laymen – all began reciting the name of God and respecting. Each household, moreover, took up lighted incense and worshipped. Truly *images seen redeem monks to the real to bless the human world with peace and weal. Henceforth the fruit ripens on Complete Liberation's way where all honour Chan and God obey.* After the three disciples had made a thorough display of their heroic ability, they lowered their auspicious clouds and put away their weapons. Going before the Tang Monk, they saluted and thanked their master for permission before taking their seats again. Those 3 young princes hurried back to the palace to report to the old prince, saying, "Dad King, ten thousand happiness have come upon you! Unsurpassable merit may be ours this very moment! You've seen the display in mid-air?"

"I only saw colourful mists in the sky," replied the old prince, "and immediately your mum and I burned incense to worship along with the rest of the residents of the palace. We've no idea what mortals have come down and congregated at this place."

"They weren't mortals from anywhere," said one of the young princes. "They were just those very ugly disciples of the scripture-seeking priest. One of them used a golden-hooped iron rod, one a nine-pronged muckrake, and the third a fiend-routing treasure staff. Though the weapons we three use may resemble theirs, ours can in no way be compared with those three weapons. We asked them to exercise for us, and they told us that it was too cramped for them to perform on the ground. They wanted to rise to the air to give us an exhibition. When they mounted the clouds, the sky was filled with auspicious clouds meandering and hallowed air circling. They finally dropped down only a moment ago to take their seats once more in the Gauze-Drying Pavilion. Your sons are so delighted that they would like very much to honour them as teachers. If we'd learn their ability to protect our nation, this would be indeed our unsurpassable merit. We wonder what our Dad King thinks of this?" The aged prince at once gave his consent to what he heard.

And so dad and sons, the four of them, did not ask for the royal carriage or the imperial panoply. Instead, they walked to the Gauze-Drying Pavilion where they found the four pilgrims packing their belongings and just about to enter the royal palace to give thanks for the meal. No sooner had the Jade-Flower and his sons entered the pavilion than they all saluted low, so startling the elder that he, too, hugged the earth to return the salutation. Pilgrim and his two brothers however, stepped to one side and only gave a slight smile. After the salutes, the prince invited the 4 priests to enter the main hall to take a seat, and the four amiably agreed. Then the old prince stood up and said, "Old Master Tang, we've a request to make. Do you think that your noble disciples will grant it?"

"Please tell us, Your Highness," said Tripitaka. "My humble disciples would not dare refuse you."

"When we first met you," said the old prince, "we thought that you're merely mendicants from the distant Tang court. In fact, our eyes of flesh and our mortal disposition prevented us from recognising you and might've greatly offended you. Just now when we beheld how Masters Sun, Bullseye, and Sand performed in the air, we realised that you're mortals and Gods. As our three unworthy sons have always been fond of martial arts, they're now most eager to become disciples in order to learn the art well. We therefore beg the masters to open their hearts wide as Heaven and Earth. Spread afar your vessels of mercy and transmit your mysteries to our humble offspring. We'll thank you with the wealth of our entire city."



On hearing this, Pilgrim could not refrain from laughing uproariously. “Your Highness!” he said. “You’re so benighted! We’re people who’ve left the family and only too anxious to take on a few disciple. If your sons have the desire to follow virtue, you think we’d turn them down? Just don’t bother with even the merest hint of payment or profit. Treat us with kindness – that’ll be our sufficient reward.” The prince was delighted by Pilgrim’s words and immediately gave the order for a huge banquet to be laid out right there in the main hall of his residence. Behold! No sooner had the decree been issued than it was carried out. *See colours flutter, curls of fragrant smoke, and gold inlaid tables festooned in bright silk to dazzle one’s eyes. Happy lacquered chairs with brocade spread out add stylishness to the seats. Fresh fruits from the trees and aromatic teas. 4 or 5 dishes of pastries so light and sweet; 1 or 2 pans-full of bread both rich and neat. More marvellous are those steamed crisps and honey-glazed; the oily-dips and sugar-roasted are truly great! A few bottles of fragrant glutinous rice-water that surpasses the juice of jade when poured; several cups of Yangxian divine tea*<sup>6</sup> *offered once held in hand, its scent overpowers the cassia. There’s food of every variety – each item’s extraordinary!* During this time the court entertainers were ordered to recite, to exercise, and to play their woodwind and string instruments. Master and disciples spent a happy day together with the prince and his princes. When night fell, the food and juice were taken away and bedding was laid out at the Gauze-Drying Pavilion for the pilgrims to rest. By morning, the prince said, the young princes would burn incense and return with all sincerity to receive instruction in martial arts. As each person obeyed the royal command, scented liquid was prepared for the masters to bathe in before retiring. At this time *the birds rest aloft and all seems at peace; he leaves the couch, the poet’s reciting ceases. The Milky Way shines as the heavens brighter; the wild path’s forlorn where grasses heighten. Washing flails jangle in a yard nearby; dark, distant hills where homeward longings lie. To know one’s feelings the cold cricket seems: its loud plaint by bedside would pierce one’s dreams!*

The night went by and early in the morning, the old prince and his sons arrived once more to visit. When they were received by the elder, they greeted the priests as their teachers, even though they themselves had been honoured as royalty the day before. Thus the young princes respected Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk as they made this request: “We beg the honourable teachers to take out their weapons and allow their disciples to look at them once more.”

On hearing this, 8 Rules took out amiably his muckrake and laid it on the ground while Sand-monk leaned his treasure staff against a wall. The second and third princes leaped up at once and tried to pick up the weapons. It was however, as if dragonflies were pummelling pillars of rock! Though both princes struggled till their heads reddened and their faces turned scarlet, they could not budge the weapons one whit. When the eldest prince saw this, he called out: “Brothers, stop wasting your energy! You’d know that the masters’ are all divine weapons but I wonder how heavy they are.”

With a chuckle, 8 Rules said, “My rake’s not too heavy! No more in fact than the weight of a single canon.<sup>7</sup> Including the handle, it weighs five thousand and forty-eight pounds.”

Turning to Sand-monk, the third prince asked, “Master, how heavy is your treasure staff?”

“It’s also five thousand and forty-eight pounds,” replied Sand-monk. The eldest prince then asked Pilgrim to show him his golden-hooped rod. Pilgrim at once took out a tiny needle from his ear; one wave of it in the wind and it acquired the thickness of a rice bowl. As it stood there erect before their eyes, all the princes were frightened and all the officials grew apprehensive. Saluting, the three young princes said, “The weapons of Master Bullseye and Master Sand are all carried on their persons and are taken out from beneath their clothes. Why’s it that only Master Sun takes out his from his ear? Why does it grow the moment it’s exposed to the wind?”

Smiling, Pilgrim said, “You don’t seem to realise that my rod’s just something you can pick up nowhere in this mortal world. This happens to be *an iron rod forged at Creation’s dawn by Great Yu himself, a god-man of old. The depths of all oceans, rivers, and lakes were fathomed and fixed by this very rod. Having bored through mountains and conquered floods, it stayed in East Ocean and ruled the seas where after long years it turned luminous, able to grow or shrink or radiate. To call it my own was old monkey’s fate, make it change in any way I wish. I want it big, it’ll fill the universe; I want it small, it’ll be a tiny pin. Its name’s Compliant, its style, Golden-hooped – in Heaven and Earth something quite unique! Its weight, thirteen thousand and five hundred pounds, can grow thick or thin, and wane or wax. It helped me to haunt the House of Heaven; followed me to crush the halls of Earth. It tames tigers and dragons everywhere; smelts at all places demons and fiends. One jab upward will make the sun grow dim and daunt the gods and ghosts of Heaven and Earth. A treasure handed down from Chaos’ time: no worldly iron’s this rod sublime!*” When those princes heard this declaration, all of them saluted repeatedly and begged with all sincerity for instruction. “What sort of martial arts do you three want to learn?” asked Pilgrim.

1 of the princes said, “The one used to wielding a rod will study the rod. The one accustomed to using a rake will study the rake, and the one fond of using the staff will study the staff.”

“It’s easy enough to give instruction,” said Pilgrim with a smile, “but none of you has any strength and can’t wield our weapons. I fear that you’ll be unable to attain mastery and then the result will be something like *poorly drawn tiger that looks like a dog!* As the ancients aptly put it, *instruction lacking sternness is the teacher’s sloth; learning without accomplishment is the student’s fault.* If the three of you’re indeed sincere about the matter, you may burn some incense to worship Heaven and Earth. Let me then transmit some divine strength to you first and only thereafter can we teach you the martial arts.”

Filled with delight by these words, the three young princes went to find an incense table and carried it back themselves. Having purified their hands and lighted sticks of incense, they saluted deeply to Heaven. After the ceremony, they then asked for instruction from their masters. Turning around, Pilgrim saluted the Tang Monk in turn and said, “Let me inform the honoured master and ask for his pardon. Since I was delivered by your great virtue that year in the Mountain of Two Frontiers, and since I embraced the faith of Religion, I’ve followed you in your westward journey. Though I’ve yet to repay all the kindness of my master, I’ve nonetheless served you with all my heart and all my strength. Now that we’ve arrived at a region in God’s kingdom, we’ve the good fortune of meeting three worthy princes who have made submission to us and are desirous of learning the martial arts. If they become our disciples, they will be the grand-disciples of my master. I want to make this special report to you before I begin instruction.” Tripitaka was exceedingly pleased.

When 8 Rules and Sand-monk saw Pilgrim saluting their master, they, too, went to their knees and respected to Tripitaka, saying, “Master, we’re foolish persons, slow of speech and dull-witted, and we don’t know how to speak. We simply beg you to take the lofty seat of religion and allow also the two of us the pleasure of taking disciples. They’ll add to our remembrance of the journey to the West.” In delight Tripitaka gave his consent.

In a secluded room behind the Gauze-Drying Pavilion, Pilgrim traced out on the ground a diagram of the Big Dipper. Then he asked the three princes to salute themselves inside the diagram and with eyes closed, exercise the utmost concentration. Behind them he himself recited in silence the true sayings of realised mortality and intoned the words of *Dhāraṇī* as he blew divine breaths into their visceral cavities. Their primordial spirits were thus restored to their original abodes.<sup>8</sup> Then he transmitted secret oral formulas to them so that each of the princes received the strength of a thousand arms. He next helped them to circulate and build up the fire-phases,<sup>9</sup> as if they themselves were carrying out the technique for shedding the mortal embryo and changing the bones. Only when the circulation of the vital force had gone through all the circuits of their bodies (modelled on planetary movements) did the young princes regain consciousness. When they jumped to their feet and gave their own faces a wipe, they felt more energetic than ever. Each of them in fact had become so sturdy in his bones and so strong in his ligaments that the eldest prince could handle the golden-hooped rod, the second prince could wield the nine-pronged muckrake, and the third prince could lift the fiend-routing staff.

When the old prince saw this, he could not have been more pleased, and another vegetarian banquet was laid out to thank the master and his three disciples. Right before the banquet tables however, they began their instruction. The one studying the rod performed with the rod; the one studying the rake performed with the rake; and the one studying the staff performed with the staff. The princes thus succeeded in making a few turns and several movements but they were, after all, mortals, and they found the goings rather strenuous. After exercising for a while, they began to pant heavily. Indeed, they could not last long, though their weapons might have the ability to undergo transformation. In their advances and retreats, their attacks and offences, the princes simply could not attain the wonder of natural transformation. Later that day the banquet came to an end.

The next day the three princes came again to thank their masters and to say: “We thank the divine master for endowing us with strength in our arms. Though we’re now able to hold the weapons of our masters however, we find it difficult to wield and turn them. We propose, therefore, that artisans be asked to duplicate the three weapons. They will use your weapons as models but take some of the weight off. Would the masters grant us permission?”

“Fine! Fine! Fine!” said 8 Rules. “That’s a remarkable proposal! You really can’t use our weapons in the first place, and besides, we need them for the protection of the Law and the subjugation of demons. You’d indeed make three other weapons.” The young princes immediately ordered the ironsmiths to purchase ten thousand pounds of raw iron. A tent was pitched in the front courtyard of the royal residence to serve as a temporary factory, and furnace and forge were set up. First, the iron was refined into steel in one day; the next day they asked Pilgrim and his two brothers to place the golden-hooped rod, the nine-pronged rake, and the fiend-routing staff in the tent so that the smiths could make copies of them. The weapons were thus left there day and night.

Alas! These weapons originally were treasures meant to be carried by the pilgrims on their persons and inseparable from them for one moment. Even when concealed by the pilgrims’ bodies, they would exude great radiance to protect their owners. Now that they had been placed in the tent factory for several days, the myriad shafts of luminous mist and auspicious air emitted by these weapons flooded the sky and covered the earth. One night, a monster-spirit sat up in his abode that happened to be some seventy miles away from the city, in a mountain called Leopard’s-Head and a cave named Tiger’s-Mouth. When he suddenly caught sight of the luminous mist and auspicious air, he mounted the clouds to investigate and found that the radiance was coming from the royal palace. Lowering his cloud to draw near, the monster-spirit discovered the three weapons and was moved to delight and desire. “Marvellous treasures! Marvellous treasures!” he exclaimed. “I wonder who uses them, and why they are placed here? Hmm! This has to be my affinity! Let’s take them away! Let’s take them away!” As his affection grew, he at once summoned a powerful gust and swept away all three weapons and returned to his own cave. Thus it is that *Dao can’t be left for a moment; what can be left is not the Dao.* <sup>10</sup>*When weapons divine are stolen, the seekers have laboured in vain.*

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The yellow lion-spirit in vain gives the Muckrake Feast; Gold, Wood, and Earth disturb with a scheme Head of the Mount Leopard

Several ironsmiths had been hard at work for several days and therefore slept soundly at night. By morning, when they rose to resume their heating and hammering, they discovered that the 3 weapons in the tent had vanished. Dumbfounded and panic-stricken, they searched all over the place and ran into the 3 young princes who were walking out from the palace to inspect the work. The ironsmiths all respected and said, “O young lords! We don’t know where the weapons of the divine masters have gone!”

Shaken by the words, the young princes said, “Perhaps the masters themselves put the weapons away at night.” They dashed over to the Gauze-Drying Pavilion and saw that the white horse was still tethered at the corridor. Unable to contain themselves, they cried, “Masters, are you still sleeping?”

“We’re up,” replied Sand-monk as he opened the door to let the princes in.

When they looked around and did not see the weapons, 1 of them asked nervously, “Did the masters take back their weapons?”

“No, we didn’t!” said Pilgrim, jumping up.

“Those three weapons of yours,” said another prince, “all vanished during the night.”

Scrambling up hurriedly, 8 Rules asked, “Is my rake there?”

Another young prince said, “When we three came out just now, we saw people searching all over but they couldn’t find them. Your disciples suspect that the weapons may already have been taken back by the masters, and that’s why we’ve come to ask you. Since the treasures of our teachers can grow or shrink, I wonder if you’ve not concealed them on your bodies again, just to make fun of your disciples.”

“Really, we’ve not taken them back,” said Pilgrim. “Let’s all go look for them.” They all went to the tent in the courtyard but there was no trace of the weapons.

“Those ironsmiths must have stolen them!” said 8 Rules. “Bring out the weapons quickly! A moment’s delay and you’ll be beaten to death! Beaten to death!”

Horrified, the ironsmiths respected and shed tears, saying, “Holy Dads! We’ve been working so hard these last few days that we all slept through the night. By morning when we got up, the weapons were gone. We’re all mortal men. How could we even have moved them? We beg you, Holy Dad, to spare our lives! Please spare our lives!”

Pilgrim said nothing in reply. Greatly annoyed, he muttered to himself, “This is our fault! Once they had copied the forms, we’d have taken the weapons back. Why did we leave them here like that? Those treasures generate tremendous radiance and luminous colours. That must have disturbed some wicked person who came and stole them during the night.”

“What are you saying, Elder Brother?” asked 8 Rules, refusing to believe him. “It’s such a peaceful region here! This is no hollow mountain on the rustic countryside! How could there be any wicked people? It has to be the greed of those ironsmiths. When they saw the radiance of our weapons, they knew that these were treasures. They must have left the palace during the night and banded together with others. They must have dragged and hauled our weapons away. Let’s seize them now! Let’s beat them!” The ironsmiths could only respect and swear their denial.

In the midst of all this commotion the old prince came out. When he learned what had taken place, his face, too, was drained of colour. He brooded for a long time and then said, “The weapons of the divine masters are not like those of common mortals. Scores or even hundreds of men could not un-lodge them or move them. Moreover, we’ve governed this city for almost five generations already.

Not that we wish to brag or boast but we do enjoy quite a virtuous reputation beyond these palace walls. The people of this city, be they civilians, soldiers, or artisans, do have respect for the laws of ours. They’d never dare be so unscrupulous. I beg the divine masters to re-examine the matter.”

“There’s no need to re-examine anything!” replied Pilgrim, laughing. “Nor need we persist in putting the blame on the ironsmiths. Let me ask Your Highness there’re any mountain forests and monstrous fiends around this city of yours?”

“This question of the divine master is most reasonable,” said the prince. “There is a Leopard’s-Head Mountain north of our city, and there is also a Tiger’s-Mouth Cave in it. People have frequently claimed that there are mortals in the cave but some say also that tigers, wolves, and monstrous fiends live there. We’ve not been able to determine exactly what creatures there’re.”

"Need to say no more," said Pilgrim, chuckling. "It must be some wicked creatures there who having discovered our treasures, stole them during the night." He then called out: "Eight Rules, Sand-monk, stay here to guard Master and protect the city. Let old monkey go and look for our weapons." He also instructed the ironsmiths not to put out the fire in the furnace so that they could continue to forge the princes' weapons. *Dear Monkey King!*

After taking leave of Tripitaka, he vanished completely from sight. Instantly he was standing on the Leopard's-Head Mountain for it was no more than 30 miles from the city. When he looked around on the peak, he saw that indeed there was a certain aura of monsters. Truly *a lengthy dragon pulse, 'a region vast and wide; pointed peaks, erect, that puncture the sky; sloping streams, dark and deep that swiftly flow. Before the mount's a carpet of jade grass; behind the mount's the brocade of rare blooms. Aged pines and cypresses; ancient trees and bamboos. Crows and magpies in confusion fly and cry; wild apes and cranes all screech and squall. Below the hanging ledge, pairs of many deer; before the sheer cliff, badgers and foxes in 2s. The dragon approaching rises and falls; with 9 turns and 9 bends comes the earth pulse. Jade-Flower District is where the ranges meet, a place that prospers in 10 millennia.* As Pilgrim stared at the scenery, he suddenly heard someone speaking from behind the mountain. Turning quickly to look, he found 2 wolf-headed fiends walking toward the northwest, chatting loudly. "These've to be fiendish creatures out patrolling the mountain," mused Pilgrim. "Let old monkey follow them and hear what they have to say." Making the magic sign with his fingers, he recited a spell and with 1 shake of his torso, changed into a little butterfly. With outstretched wings he soared and turned to catch up with them. *In truth it was quite a model of transformation!*

*2 wings gossamer-like, twin feelers silvery. Aloft the wind he darts away or exercises slowly through the day. The waters and walls so nimbly he'll skirt; with fragrant catkins his delight's to flirt. Scents of fresh flowers his airy self-most please; his graceful form unfolds with greatest ease.* Wings aflutter, he alighted on the head of 1 of the monster-spirits to eavesdrop on them. All of a sudden, the monster said, "Second Elder Brother, our Great King's had several pieces of good luck. Last month he got himself a beautiful lady who's been giving him a good time in the cave. Then last night he acquired these three weapons and they're truly priceless treasures. Tomorrow he plans to give a banquet at this so-called Muckrake Festival. All of us are going to enjoy ourselves."

"We're quite lucky, too!" said the other 1. "We've these twenty taels of silver to take to buy bulls and sheep. When we reach the Northwest Market, let's have a few bottles of juice first. Let's skim two or three taels off the top so that we can buy a cotton jacket for winter. Won't that be nice?" The two fiends thus chatted and giggled as they sped along the main road.

When Pilgrim heard that there was to be a Muckrake Festival, he was secretly pleased. He would have slain the fiends but he had no weapon, and in any case he felt that they were not responsible for theft. Flying ahead of them, therefore, he resumed his original form and stood still by the road. He waited until those two fiends had almost reached him and then suddenly spat a mouthful of magic saliva onto them crying, "*Om Hūm Ṭa Li!*"

At once this magic of immobilization rendered those 2 wolf-headed spirits completely motionless: eyes unblinking, they could not even open the mouths; body upright, their 2 legs stood absolutely still. Then Pilgrim pushed both of them over, searched through their clothes, and did indeed find the twenty taels of silver wrapped in a little bag tied to the belt around one of their waists. Each of them also had a white lacquered tablet hanging on his belt; on one was the inscription Shifty-and-Freaky, and on the other, Freaky-and-Shifty. Dear Great Sage! He took their silver and untied their tablets, then strode back to the city. When he arrived at the royal residence, he gave a thorough account to the prince, the Tang Monk, the various officials, and the artisans. "It must be," said 8 Rules, chuckling, "Old bull's treasure that is emitting such great radiance that they have to buy bulls and sheep to feast and celebrate. Now how are we going to get it back?"

Pilgrim said, "All three of us brothers ought to go there. The silver should be given to our own artisans as a reward. Let's ask His Highness for a few sheep and bulls. 8 Rules, you change into the form of Shifty-and-Freaky, and I'll change into the form of Freaky-and-Shifty. Sand-monk can disguise himself as a trader of sheep and bulls. We'll enter the Tiger's-Mouth Cave that way. When we've the chance, each of us will grab our own weapon and finish off those monstrous deviates. Then we can be on our way."

"Marvellous! Marvellous! Marvellous!" laughed Sand-monk. "We'd not delay! Let's go!"

The old prince indeed agreed to his scheme and asked 1 of his stewards to purchase about 7 bulls and 4 or 5 sheep. The 3 brothers took leave of their master and went out of the city to exercise their magic powers. "Elder Brother," said 8 Rules, "since I've never laid eyes on that Shifty-and-Freaky, how'd I change into his form?"

"That fiend's been rendered motionless by old monkey's magic of immobilisation," said Pilgrim, "and he'll not come out of it until this time tomorrow. But I remember how he looks. Stand still and let me show you what to change into. Like this ... this ... and you'll look like him."

Instantly he was transformed into an exact image of Shifty-and-Freaky. The fiend's tablet was then hung on his waist. Pilgrim also changed into the form of Freaky-and-Shifty with the proper tablet hanging on his waist. Sand-monk then disguised himself as a trader; herding the bulls and sheep, the 3 of them took the main road heading straight for the mountain. In a little while they entered the fold of the mountain and again ran into a little monster. *He'd some vicious features indeed! Look at those 2 round, rolling eyes like lamps aglow; and red, bristling hair like flames ablaze. Bottled nose, gaping mouth, and sharp teeth protruding; bi-forked ears, caved-in brow, and puffed up blue face. He wore a light yellow garment and trod a pair of rush sandals – strong and sturdy like a savage god, brash and hasty like a wicked demon.* With a coloured lacquered box for invitations tucked under his left arm, the fiend yelled at Pilgrim, "Freaky-and-Shifty, have you two returned? How many animals did you buy?"

"Just look at what we're herding," replied Pilgrim.

"And who's this?" asked the fiend, facing Sand-monk.

"He's an animal trader," said Pilgrim. "We still owe him a few taels of silver, and we're taking him home so that he can be paid. Where're you going?"

The fiend said, "I'm heading for the Bamboo-Knot Mountain to invite the venerable great king to attend a festival tomorrow." Following the drift of the conversation, Pilgrim immediately asked him, "How many people are invited altogether?"

"The venerable great king will head the table, of course," said the fiend. "Including our great king and the captains of our mountain, there'll be some forty persons." They were conversing like that when 8 Rules spoke up, "Let's get going! The animals have scattered!"

"You round them up," said Pilgrim, "While I ask him for the invitation so I can have a look." Because he thought that Pilgrim was a member of their own family, the fiend opened the box and took out the invitation card to hand over to Pilgrim. Pilgrim unfolded it and found this message written on it:

Tomorrow morning a banquet will be reverently prepared for you so that we may celebrate the Fine Festival of the Muckrake. I pray that you'll visit our mountain with your chariot and attendants. It will be our good fortune if you don't refuse. With profound gratitude I submit this invitation to my Venerable Grandmaster, the 9-fold-Numina Primal Sage. Your grand-disciple, Yellow Lion, respects 100 times.

After reading it, Pilgrim handed the card back to the fiend who put it back in the box and took off toward the southeast.

"Elder Brother," asked Sand-monk, "what does the card say?"

"It's an invitation to celebrate a festival of the muckrake. The sender identifies himself as such: 'Your grand-disciple, Yellow Lion, respects a hundred times.' The one to whom the invitation is addressed happens to be the grandmaster, one '9-fold Numina Primal Sage.'" On hearing this, 8 Rules laughed and said, "This has to be Old bull's property!"

"How can you tell that it's your property?" asked Pilgrim.

8 Rules said, "The ancients have a saying that 'A scabby sow is the special foe of the golden-haired lion.' That's why I say that this is Old bull's property."

As the 3 of them chatted and laughed, they herded the bulls and sheep along. Soon they caught sight of the Tiger's-Mouth Cave. Outside the door this was the scenery they saw: *emerald mountains all around like cities in 1 row bound. Green creepers the crags entwine; from tall cliffs hang purple vines. Bird-chirps the woods invade; flowers the cave's entrance shade. A Peach-Blossom Cave<sup>2</sup> no less, such that hermits would possess.* When they approached the cave, they found a motley crew of monster-spirits, old and young, cavorting beneath the blossoms and trees. The "Ho! Ho!" snorting of 8 Rules as he herded the animals caught their attention, and they all came forward to meet members of their own household. As they went after the bulls and sheep and began trussing them, the commotion alerted the monster-king inside who led a dozen little monsters to come out and asked, "So, you two have returned? How many bulls and sheep did you buy?"

"Eight bulls and seven sheep," replied Pilgrim, "altogether fifteen animals. The price of bulls should be sixteen taels of silver, the price of sheep, nine taels. We received twenty taels before. Now we still owe five taels. This is the trader who came along to get his money."

On hearing this, the monster-king gave the order: "Little ones, fetch five taels of silver and send the man off."

Pilgrim said, "This trader didn't just come for his money. He wanted to observe the festival too."

Enraged, the monster-king rebuked him, saying, "What a rogue you're, Freaky Child! You're supposed just to make the purchase. Why did you've to mention the festival to anyone?" 8 Rules drew near and said, "My lord, the treasures you acquired are indeed rare in the world. What's wrong with letting him take a look at them?"

"You're a pest, too, Shifty Child!" snapped the monster. "I got my treasures from the city in the Jade-Flower District. If this trader sees them and spreads the news in the district, the prince may hear about it. If he then comes here to look, what am I going to do?"

"My Lord," said Pilgrim, "this trader comes from behind the Northwest Market. He's not a resident of the city. How could he go there and spread the word? Besides, he's a little hungry, and neither of us has eaten. If there's any juice and food in the house, please give him some, and then send him off." He had hardly finished speaking when a little monster handed over five taels of silver to him.

Passing the silver to Sand-monk, Pilgrim said, "Trader, take the silver. I'll take you to the back to have some food."

Forcing himself to be bold, Sand-monk went inside the cave with 8 Rules and Pilgrim. When they reached the second-level hall, they found a votive table set up in the centre on which the nine-pronged muckrake was laid, its colourful radiance truly blinding. Leaning on the east wall was the golden-hooped rod, and on the west a fiend-routing staff. The monster-king who had followed them in said,

"Trader, the luminous thing in the centre's the muckrake. You may look at it but ever mention this to no one after you leave." Sand-monk nodded and thanked him. *Alas! When someone sees his property, he will go for it certainly.* For his entire life that 8 Rules had been an impetuous person. When he saw the muckrake, he was not about to engage in anymore small talk. Running up to the table and seizing it with both hands, he changed back into his true form and struck at the face of the monster-spirit. Pilgrim and Sand-monk, too dashed to both walls to grab their own weapons and change back into their true forms. As the 3 brothers began to attack madly, the fiendish king retreated hastily to the back where he picked up a 4-light shovel<sup>3</sup> with a long handle and a sharp blade. Rushing back out into the courtyard, he blocked the 3 weapons and shouted, "Who're you that you dare use a trick to wangle my treasures from me?"

"You larcenous hairy lump!" scolded Pilgrim. "So you don't recognise us! We're the disciples of Tripitaka Tang, a sage monk from the Land of the East. When we'd our travel rescripts certified at the Jade-Flower District, the noble prince there asked his three sons to submit to us as teachers and learn martial arts from us. Because our treasures were to serve as models for their weapons that're being forged, we left them in the yard and they're stolen by you larcenous hairy lump during the night. And you say instead that we use a trick to wangle your treasures! Don't run away! Have a taste of what our three weapons can dish up for you!" The monster-spirit immediately raised his shovel to oppose him. Thus began a battle that moved from the courtyard to beyond the front door. Look at those 3 monks crowding 1 fiend. *A marvellous fight it's! The rod wishes like the wind; the rake descends like the rain. The staff lifts up to fill the sky with mist; the shovel extends to colour the clouds. Like three gods refining great cinnabar – the flames, the colours would awe ghosts and gods. Pilgrim's most able to exert his power. The monster stole treasures, how insolent!*

*8 Rules, Heavenly Reeds, now shows his might; Sand-monk the great warrior is good and strong. Brothers united, use their smart device and stir up a fight in Tiger's-Mouth Cave. That fiend is tough and he exploits his wiles: 4 sturdy heroes thus have quite a match. They brawl this time till the sun's heading west when the monster grows weak and fails to stand.* After they fought for a long time on the Leopard's-Head Mountain, the monster-spirit could no longer withstand his opponents. He shouted at Sand-monk, "Watch my shovel!"

As Sand-monk stepped aside to dodge the blow, he escaped through the hole thus created. Mounting the wind, he sped toward the southeast. 8 Rules was about to give chase when Pilgrim said, "Let him go. As the ancient proverb has it, 'The desperate bandit shouldn't be pursued.' Let's cut off his way of retreat instead."

8 Rules agreed. Going up to the entrance of the cave, the three of them slaughtered all of those hundred-odd monster-spirits, old and young alike. They were actually tigers, wolves, leopards, horses, deer, and mountain goats. Then the Great Sage used his magic to haul up all the valuable belongings from the cave, the carcasses of the slain monsters, and the bulls and sheep that had been herded there. With dried wood Sand-monk started a fire, and 8 Rules wagged his ears to fan up a strong gust. The entire lair was thus gutted; after which, they took the stuff brought out of the cave and returned to the city. At that time the city gates had not been closed for people had not yet retired. The old prince and his sons were waiting with the Tang Monk at the Gauze-Drying Pavilion when they suddenly found the courtyard littered with dead beasts, live bulls and sheep, and some fine jewels and clothing thrown down from mid-air. Then they heard the cry, "Master, we've returned in triumph!" The prince gave thanks immediately, and Elder Tang was filled with delight. When the three young princes went to their knees, Sand-monk raised them and said, "Don't thank us yet. Let's take a look at what we've here."

"Where do they all come from?" asked the old prince.

"Those tigers, wolves, leopards, horses, deer, and mountain goats," said Pilgrim with a smile, "happen to be spirits who have become fiends. We succeeded in recovering our weapons and fought our way out of their door. The old monster's actually a golden-haired lion. Using a four-lights shovel, he fought with us till dusk before fleeing for his life toward the southeast. Instead of giving him pursuit, we eliminated his way of retreat by slaughtering all the rest of the fiends and bringing back these valuable belongings of his."

The old prince was both delighted and alarmed by what he heard: he was delighted by the victory but he was also alarmed by the possibility that the monster might return to exact vengeance.

"Please do not worry, Your Highness," said Pilgrim. "I've considered the matter also, and I'll take appropriate action. We'll certainly clean up the whole affair for you before we depart, so that no harm will come to you afterward. When we went there this noon, we ran into a red-haired, blue-faced little monster on his way to deliver an invitation. This was what I saw written on the card: *Tomorrow morning a banquet will be reverently prepared for you so that we may celebrate the Fine Festival of the Muckrake. I pray that you'll visit our mountain with your chariot and attendants. It'll be our good fortune if you don't refuse. With profound gratitude I submit this invitation to my Venerable Grandmaster, the 9-fold Numina Primal Sage.*

*Your grand-disciple, Yellow Lion*

The sender was identified. When that monster-spirit fled in defeat just now, he must have gone to his grandpa's place to talk. Tomorrow they will certainly come looking for us to exact vengeance. We'll then make a clean sweep of these monsters for you." The old prince thanked him and asked for the evening maigre to be served. After master and disciples had eaten, they retired. The monster-spirit headed southeast and did indeed flee to the Bamboo-Knot Mountain. In that mountain was a cave-dwelling with the name of 9-Bends Curved Cave. The 9-fold-Numina Primal Sage living there was the grandpa of the monster-spirit whose legs that night never descended from the wind. By the time of the fifth watch, he arrived at the entrance of the cave and was admitted after knocking on the door. One little monster said to him, "Great King, Little Blue Face arrived last night to deliver your invitation, and Venerable Dad asked him to stay till this morning, so that he could go with him to attend your muckrake festival. How's it that you also have come at such an early hour to deliver another invitation in person?"

"I don't know what to say," replied the monster-spirit, "but there isn't going to be any festival!"

As he spoke, Little Blue Face came out and said, "Great King, why are you here? Once Venerable Dad Great King gets up, he'll go with me to attend your festival." The monster-spirit however, could only wave his hand nervously without uttering a word.

In a little while, the old monster arose and summoned his visitor in. As the monster-spirit abandoned his weapon and went to his knees, he could not stop the tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Worthy grandchild," said the old monster, "you sent me an invitation yesterday, and I was about to go attend your festival this morning. Now you've even come in person. But why are you so sad and troubled?"

Respecting, the monster-spirit said, "Your grand-disciple was taking a leisurely stroll the other night in the moonlight when he saw radiance flooding the sky over the Jade-Flower District. When I hastened to investigate, I found three luminous weapons in the courtyard of the royal residence: a muckrake with nine prongs dipped in gold, a treasure staff, and a golden-hooped rod. After your grand-disciple brought them back with magic, he wanted to have a Fine Festival of the Muckrake. The little ones were told to purchase bulls, sheep, and various fruits to prepare a banquet for celebration and for the enjoyment of our grandpa. After I sent off Blue Face yesterday to deliver the invitation to you, Child Freaky whom I asked to go buy the bulls and sheep, returned herding a few animals. He brought a trader along who came to collect some money we owed him and insisted on being an observer of the festival. At first your grand-disciple refused, for I feared that he might spread the news to the wrong person outside. Then he claimed he was hungry and asked for food. So I told him to go inside to eat. When they walked in and saw the weapons, they claimed they were theirs. Each of them in fact seized one of the weapons and then changed into his original form: one was a priest with a hairy face and a thunder-god beak, one was a priest with a long horn and huge ears, and one was a priest with dark, gloomy complexion. Without regard for good or ill, they all shouted madly that they wanted to fight. Your humble grandson took up the four-lights shovel quickly to oppose them, trying at the same time to find out who they were that they dared used such deception. They claimed that they were disciples of the Tang Monk who had been sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to go to the Western Heaven. They were passing through the city and having their rescript certified when they were detained by the young princes who wanted to learn martial arts from them. Their three weapons were placed in the yard as models to be copied, and I stole them. That was the explanation for their angry attack on me. But I don't know the names of those three priests who all seem very able. Your grandson alone could not withstand the three of them. So I fled in defeat to my grandpa, in hopes that you'd take up arms to assist me and seize those monks to exact vengeance. That would be a great token of your love for your grandson."

On hearing these words, the old monster reflected in silence for a while. With a chuckle, he said, "So, it's they! My worthy grandchild, you made a mistake when you got *them* involved!"

"Do you know who they are, grandmaster?" asked the monster-spirit.

"The one with a long horn and huge ears," said the old monster, "happens to be Bullseye 8 Rules, and the one with dark, gloomy complexion is Sand-monk. These two are still all right. But the one who has a hairy face and a thunder-god beak goes by the name of Pilgrim Sun. This person truly has vast magic powers. When he caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago, not even a hundred thousand warriors from Heaven could capture him. Moreover, he devotes himself to mischief-making. Whether it's ransacking a mountain or overturning an ocean, breaking down a cave or besieging a city, he's a real champion at creating troubles! How could you provoke *him*? All right, I'll go with you. I'll capture that fellow and those princes of Jade-Flower as well, just to relieve your feelings." The monster-spirit respected to give thanks.

Immediately the old monster summoned into his presence his various grandsons: Gibbon-Lion,<sup>4</sup> Snow Lion, Suanyi,<sup>5</sup> Baize,<sup>6</sup> Wildcat, and Elephant-Baiter. Led by Yellow Lion, each of them took up a sharp weapon and mounted a gust of violent wind to reach the Leopard's-Head Mountain. There they encountered the powerful odour of fire and smoke and heard the sound of weeping. When they looked more carefully, they found Freaky and Shifty sobbing and crying for their lord.

"Are you the real Freaky Child or the false Freaky Child?" snapped the monster-spirit as he walked up to them.

The two fiends fell on their knees. As they respected and tried to hold back their tears, the two fiends said, "How could we be false? Yesterday we took the money to go purchase bulls and sheep. When we got to the main road west of the mountain, we ran into a priest with a hairy face and a thunder-god beak. He spat on us once and immediately our legs grew weak and our mouths clamped shut. We'd neither talk nor walk. He pushed us over and searched out our silver. He took our tablets, too. Neither of us snapped out of our stupor until just now. When we got home, the smoke and fire had not yet died but all our buildings had been burned out. Because we'd not see our lord or any of the captains and officers, we stayed here and wept. How did this fire start anyway?"

When he heard this, the monster-spirit could not stop the tears gushing from his eyes. As he stamped the ground with both feet, he railed spitefully, "Baldy! You're so wicked! How'd you do such a vicious thing? You've gutted my cave-dwelling, burned my pretty lady to death, and robbed me of all my family and belongings! I'm so mad I'd die! I'm so mad I'd die!"

The old monster asked Gibbon-Lion to drag him over and said to him, "Worthy grandchild, when things have reached this stage, getting mad won't do you any good. Let's conserve our vitality instead so that we may go seize those monks in the prefectural city."

Refusing to stop his wailing, the monster-spirit said, "Venerable Dad! That mountain home of mine wasn't built in a day! Now it's completely wrecked by that baldpate! What do I've to live for?" He struggled up and would have rammed his head against a boulder to kill himself had not Snow Lion and Gibbon-Lion stopped him with their earnest pleadings. After a while, they left the mountain and headed for the city.

When their churning wind and looming fog drew near, the people outside all parts of the capital were so terrified that men and women alike fled into the city with scant regard for their homes or possessions. After they had entered, the gates were shut tightly; meanwhile, someone had sped to the palace to cry, "Disaster! Disaster!" The princes and the Tang Monk were just enjoying breakfast in the Gauze-Drying Pavilion when they heard this report. When they stepped out to inquire, the people said, "A large band of monster-spirits are approaching the city, kicking up sand and stone and belching wind and fog."

"What shall we do?" exclaimed the old prince, horrified.

"Relax, all of you!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "This must be the monster-spirit from the Tiger's-Mouth Cave who fled in defeat yesterday toward the southeast. Now he has banded together with that so-called Nine-fold-Numina Primal Sage to come here. Let us brothers go out to meet them. Order the four gates closed and call up men to guard the city." The prince indeed gave the order for the city gates to be closed and armed men were summoned to ascend the rampart. On the city tower the prince, together with his three sons and the Tang Monk, made the roll call. Amid fluttering banners that blotted out the sun and cannon fire that filled the sky, Pilgrim and his two brothers left the city midway between cloud and fog to face their enemies. Thus it was that *affinity's lack had caused wise weapons' loss and stirred up the demons, their perverse foes.*

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### Masters, lions, 1 teachers, and pupils, all return to the 1; Thieves, the Dao, snares, and Religion, quiet 9-fold-Numina

We're telling you about the Great Sage Sun who went out of the city with 8 Rules and Sand-monk. When they met the monster-spirits face to face, they found them to be a bunch of lions of various colours: Yellow Lion Spirit led in front with Suanyi Lion and Elephant-Baiter on his left, Baize Lion and Wildcat on his right, and Gibbon-Lion and Snow Lion at the back. In the middle of the group was a nine-headed lion, and by his side was the fiend, Child Blue Face, holding a brocade pennant with raised floral patterns. Child Shifty-and-Freaky and Child Freaky-and-Shifty held high two red banners as they all stood in an orderly fashion to the north. 8 Rules, always foolhardy, walked up to them and began to abuse them, saying, "You larcenous fiend! Where did you go to collect these several hairy lumps to come here?"

"You lawless and vicious bonze!" cried the Yellow Lion Spirit, baring his teeth. "Yesterday three of you attacked one of me and I was defeated. Wasn't that enough that you'd the upper hand? Why did you've to be so cruel as to burn down my cave-dwelling, ruin my mountain home, and harm all my relatives? My animosity toward you is deep as the sea! Don't run away! Have a taste of your venerable dad's shovel."

*Dear 8 Rules!* He met the lion with upraised rake. The 2 of them had just come together and no decision could yet be reached when the Gibbon-Lion wielding an iron caltrop and the Snow Lion Spirit using a 3-cornered club<sup>2</sup> also advanced to attack. "Welcome!" shouted 8 Rules.

On his side, Sand-monk quickly took out his fiend-routing staff to lend his assistance. Then Suanyi Spirit, Baize Spirit, Elephant-Baiter, and Wildcat all surged forward, and they were met by the Great Sage Sun grasping his golden-hooped rod. Suanyi used a cudgel, Baize a bronze mallet, Elephant-Baiter a steel lance, and Wildcat a battle-axe. *Those seven lion-spirits and these three savage priests thus had quite a battle! Mallet, cudgel, lance, and 3-cornered club, 4-lights shovel, iron caltrop, and an axe<sup>3</sup> – 7 lions with 7 weapons sharp encircle 3 priests as they roar and shout. Vicious is the Great Sage's iron rod and rare among men, Sand-monk's treasure staff. 8 Rules sallies forth as if plague-ridden with a radiant muckrake that terrifies. Back and front they parry as they ply their might; left and right they charge for they're fearless all. Princes on the rampart now lend their strength by beating gongs and drums to rouse their hearts. Pressing back and forth they use magic power and fight till Heaven and Earth grow obscure.* Those monster-spirits fought for half a day with the Great Sage and his two companions, and it became late. 8 Rules was foaming at the mouth and his legs were gradually weakening. With a last half-hearted wave of his rake, he turned to flee. "Where're you off to? Watch out!" cried Snow-Lion and Gibbon-Lion.

Idiot did not dodge quickly enough and received a blow to his spine from the club. As he lay flat on the ground, all he could mumble was "Finished! Finished!"

Seizing him by the bristles and the tail, the 2 spirits hauled 8 Rules away to show him to the 9-headed lion saying, "Grandmaster, we've caught one."

They had hardly finished speaking when Sand-monk and Pilgrim, too, were defeated. As the various monster-spirits gave chase together however, Pilgrim pulled off a bunch of hairs, chewed them to pieces, and spat them out, crying, "Change!" They changed at once to hundreds of little Pilgrims who had Baize, Suanyi, Elephant-Baiter, Wildcat, and the golden-haired lion-fiend completely surrounded. Sand-monk and Pilgrim then returned and also plunged into the fray. When night fell, they captured Suanyi and Baize, though Wildcat, Elephant-Baiter, and Golden Hair managed to escape. When the old fiend learned from his grandsons that two lions were lost, he gave this instruction: "Tie up Bullseye 8 Rules but don't take his life. Wait till they return our two lions, and we'll give 8 Rules back to them. If they're foolish enough to harm our two lions, we'll make 8 Rules pay with his life."

That night the various monsters rested outside the city. The Great Sage Sun had the 2 lion-spirits hauled near the city. When the old prince saw them, he ordered the city gates open and sent out some thirty guards with ropes to truss up the lion-spirits and take them inside. After he had retrieved his magic hairs, the Great Sage Sun went with Sand-monk up to the city tower to see the Tang Monk.

"That's quite a fierce battle!" said the Tang Monk. "You think Aware of Ability will live?"

"Relax!" replied Pilgrim. "Since we've caught these two monster-spirits, they'll never dare harm him. Let's have these two spirits firmly bound so that they may be exchanged for 8 Rules tomorrow."

Respecting to Pilgrim, the 3 young princes said, "When our master first went into battle, we saw only one of you. But when you feigned defeat later, over a hundred of you suddenly appeared. By the time you'd the monster-spirits captured and returned to the side of the city, you became a single person once more. What sort of magic's that?"

"On my body," replied Pilgrim with a chuckle, "there're eighty-four thousand hairs. One of them can change into ten of me and the ten can also change into a hundred. In fact, the transformation can grow to millions and billions. This is the magic of the body beyond the body." 1 after another, the princes touched their heads to the ground to show their reverence after which food was brought up to the tower for them to dine right there. At each crenel on the battlement were set up lanterns and flags, watch rattles, gongs, and drums. The soldiers were told to be diligent in announcing the watches, sending communication arrows, firing cannons, and shouting battle cries. Soon it was dawn. The old fiend summoned the Yellow Lion Spirit into his presence to give him this plan: "All of you'd today exert yourselves to try to capture Pilgrim and Sand-monk. Let me secretly soar through the air to ascend the city and seize their master along with the old prince and his sons. After that, I'll go back first to the Nine-bends Curved Cave to wait for your triumphal return."

Accepting the plan, Yellow Lion led Gibbon-Lion, Snow Lion, Elephant-Baiter, and Wildcat, each grasping his weapon, and approached the city to provoke battle, in the midst of churning wind and rolling mist. On this side Pilgrim and Sand-monk leaped down from the parapet and shouted, "Lawless fiends! Return our brother Eight Rules quickly and we'll spare your lives! Otherwise, we'll pulverise you!"

Those monster-spirits of course did not permit further conversation. As they rushed forward, Great Sage and his companion both exercised their intelligence to oppose those 5 lions. This battle was quite different from that of yesterday: *a vicious, howling wind that scrubs the earth, a dark, heavy fog that blots out the sky. Flying dirt and stone dismay ghosts and gods; toppling trees and woods alarm tigers and wolves. The lance is cruel, the axe, luminous; caltrop, club, and shovel are all ruthless. How they wish they'd swallow Pilgrim whole or capture alive that puny Sand-monk! This 1 compliant rod of Great Sage can thrust, turn, toss, and twist most cleverly. That fiend-routing staff of bold Sand-monk has great fame beyond the Divine Mists Hall. Their action this time has great magic powers to sweep away the spirits of the West.* When that battle between those five lion-spirits with coats of more than 1 colour and Sand-monk and Pilgrim reached its most feverish moment, the old fiend mounted a dark cloud to ascend the city tower. All he had to do was to give his heads a shake, and those on the rampart – the various officials and the guards – became so terrified that they all tumbled down from the battlement. He sped inside the tower, and with wide-open mouths, caught hold of Triptitaka, the old prince, and his sons. He then went back to the spot at the north and seized 8 Rules with another mouth. He had altogether nine heads, and he therefore had nine mouths. 1 mouth held the Tang Monk, the 2<sup>nd</sup> 1 8 Rules, the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1 the old prince, the 4<sup>th</sup> 1 the eldest young prince, the 5<sup>th</sup> 1 the 2<sup>nd</sup> young prince, and the 6<sup>th</sup> 1 the 3<sup>rd</sup> young prince. *With six persons in six mouths, I've still three empty ones!* "I'm leaving first!" he roared.

When these 5 young lion-spirits saw the triumph of their grandmaster, they became more aggressive than ever. Pilgrim, too, heard the commotion on the rampart, and he knew at once that he had fallen for their scheme. Quickly admonishing Sand-monk to be careful, he ripped off all his hairs from both arms and chewed them to pieces before spitting them out: they changed instantly into hundreds and thousands of little Pilgrims. As they surged forward to attack, they dragged down the Gibbon-Lion, captured live Snow Lion, caught hold of Elephant-Baiter, overturned Wildcat, and beat to death Yellow Lion. From this wild melee however, Child Blue Face, Shifty-and-Freaky, and Freaky-and-Shifty managed to escape.

When the officials on the rampart saw what was happening, they opened the city gates once more and brought out ropes to tie up the five lion-spirits. After they had been dragged inside and before they had even been disposed of, a tearful queen came to salute Pilgrim saying, "O divine master! Our Royal Highness, his sons, and your master may have lost their lives! What's to become of this deserted city?"

"Worthy Queen, please do not grieve," said the Great Sage saluting her as he retrieved his magic hairs. "Because I've caught these seven lion-spirits, I don't think that my master or His Highness and his heirs will be harmed, even though they've been abducted by the magic of the old monster. Early next morning, we two brothers will go to that mountain. We promise you that we'll capture the old monster and return four princes to you."

When the queen and other court ladies heard this, all of them respected to Pilgrim and said, "We pray earnestly that the lives of His Highness and his heirs be preserved and that his royal dominion be established forever!"

After their salutes, each of them returned to the palace, struggling to hold back her tears. Pilgrim gave this instruction to the various officials: "Skin that Yellow Lion Spirit that we've beaten to death and lock up the rest of the 6 living ones. Bring us some vegetarian food so that we may take a rest after the meal. You can all relax for I promise you nothing serious will occur." On the following day, the Great Sage led Sand-monk to mount the auspicious cloud, and in a little while, they arrived at the summit of the Bamboo-Knot Mountain. As they lowered the direction of their cloud to look around, they saw a marvellous tall mountain indeed with *a row of peaks rugged and summits most jagged. Deep in the stream flows a gurgling torrent; below the cliff blooms the ornate fragrance. Winding ranges 1 after another and ancient paths encircling. Truly the cranes arrive to squire the pines but the clouds depart to make the rocks forlorn. The apes face the sunlight to search for fruits and deer enjoy the warmth to find their flowers. The bluebird's reedy poems, the oriole's murmuring notes. Spring peaches and plums vie for glamour; summer elms and willows both prosper; autumn spreads brocades of yellow flowers; winter comes with white snow aflutter. A splendid scene in all 4 seasons as good as the mortal Isle Yingzhou.* As they enjoyed the scenery on the summit, they suddenly caught sight of that Child Blue Face dashing out of a little valley down below, his hand gripping a small cudgel. "Where do you think you're going?" bellowed Pilgrim. "Old monkey's here!" The little monster was so terrified that he tumbled down the slope while the 2 brothers eagerly gave chase. In a moment however, Blue Face disappeared. A few steps more brought them to the front of a cave-dwelling where they found tightly shut two doors of veined rocks. Across the top of the door was a stone placard with the following inscription in clerkly script:

Myriad-Numina Bamboo-Knot Mountain, 9-Bends Curved Cave

The little monster had dashed in and closed the doors, and had gone to the centre of the cave to say to the old monster, "Venerable Dad, there're two monks outside again."

The old monster said, "Did your great king and the rest return – Gibbon-Lion, Snow Lion, Elephant-Baiter, and Wildcat?"

"I've seen none of them! I've not seen any of them!" replied the little monster. "Only two monks high on the peak scanning the region. I turned and ran when I saw them. They chased me back here and I quickly bolted the door."

On hearing this, the old monster fell silent for a long time; then all at once he shed a few tears. "Woel" he cried. "My Yellow Lion disciple's dead and the others have all been taken captive into the city by those priests. How I'm to avenge myself?"

Lying on one side, a melancholy 8 Rules who had been trussed up along with the Tang Monk, the old prince, and his sons and left there to suffer, was gladdened by this statement of the old monster about his grandsons. "Master, don't be afraid!" he whispered. "And Your Highness, don't worry! My elder brother has won a victory and caught several monsters. He'll soon find his way here to rescue us." He finished speaking, and then he heard the old monster say, "Little ones, stand guard here. Let me go out and capture those two monks and bring them in here also for punishment."

Look at him! With neither armour on his body nor weapons in his hands, he walked in big strides up to the front where he could hear the shouting of Pilgrim Sun. Flinging wide the doors, he did not wait for the exchange of even one word before heading straight for Pilgrim. As Pilgrim wielded his iron rod to meet him, Sand-monk brandished his treasure staff and struck. All the old monster did was to give his head one shake, and eight other heads with open mouths appeared, four on each side. Ever so gently they caught Pilgrim and Sand-monk and brought them inside the cave. "Bring me some ropes!" he cried.

Shifty-and-Freaky, Freaky-and-Shifty, and Child Blue Face were the three who had escaped with their lives the night before. Taking out two ropes, they bound up the priests firmly.

"You wretched ape!" said the old monster. "You've taken my seven grandsons but I've caught four of you priests and four princes. That should be a fair exchange for my grandsons' lives! Little ones, select some thorny willow canes. Let's give this monkey-head a flogging, so that my Yellow Lion grand-disciple may be avenged."

Each picking up a willow cane, those three little monsters began to rain blows on Pilgrim. Pilgrim's body however, was one that had undergone prolonged cultivation and refinement. The effect of those willow canes on him was no more severe than scratching an itch! No matter how hard they flogged him, he neither showed concern nor made a sound. 8 Rules, the Tang Monk, and the princes however, were petrified at the sight. After a little while, even the canes broke from the flogging and had to be replaced.

It went on like this until evening. The blows Pilgrim received were numberless. When Sand-monk saw how long Pilgrim had been beaten, he felt guilty and said, "Let me take a hundred strokes or so for him!"

"Don't be so impatient!" said the old monster. "You'll be beaten tomorrow! Each of you'll have your turn!" Horrified, 8 Rules said, "Then the day after tomorrow will be Old bull's turn!"

The flogging continued for yet another while until it grew dark. "Little ones, let's stop!" cried the old monster. "Light the lamps, and take some food and drink, all of you. I'm going to my brocade den to take a nap. All three of you've suffered before in the hands of these monks, and you'd therefore guard them carefully. Wait till tomorrow before we flog them some more."

Moving the lamps over, the three little monsters took up the willow canes and began beating Pilgrim's skull: tick-tick-tuck, tuck-tuck-tick, now fast, now slow, it sounded as if they were beating a rattle. As the night deepened however, the monsters all fell sound asleep.

Immediately Pilgrim exercised his magic of Passage. He shrank his body and climbed out of the ropes. Having shaken loose his fur and straightened out his clothes, he whipped out his rod from his ear. One wave of it and it acquired the thickness of a bucket and the length of twenty feet. "You cursed beasts!" he said to the three little monsters. "You've beaten your Venerable Dad umpteen times but he hasn't changed a bit. Let your Venerable Dad drop this rod on you a little, and see what happens!" Ever so lightly he dropped the rod on those three little fiends, and at once they turned into three meat patties.

Then Pilgrim pulled up the wick in a lamp and began to untie Sand-monk. As he had been hurting from the ropes, 8 Rules could not refrain from saying in a loud voice, "Elder Brother, my hands and feet are swollen! Why can't you untie me first?" This one yell of Idiot's aroused the old monster who scrambled up immediately saying, "Who's untying...?"

When he heard that, Pilgrim blew out the lamp immediately and abandoned Sand-monk. With his iron rod he punched through several doors and escaped. The old monster went out to the centre hall and called out: "Little ones, why are the lights out? Has someone escaped?"

He shouted like that once but no one answered him. He cried again but still there was no answer. By the time he lit a lamp himself, the first thing he saw were 3 bloody meat patties on the ground. Then he saw that the old prince, his sons, the Tang Monk and 8 Rules were still there; only Pilgrim and Sand-monk had disappeared. With a lighted torch, he rushed to the back and front to search for them, and he found Sand-monk sidling along a wall in one of the porches. The old monster grabbed him, threw him on the ground, and tied him up as before. Then he continued to search for Pilgrim. When he saw that several of the doors had been smashed, he knew that Pilgrim had managed to escape. Instead of giving chase, he tried to patch up and repair the doors to guard his property. The Great Sage Sun having emerged from the 9-Bends Curved Cave, went straight back to the Jade-Flower County astride the auspicious cloud. In the air above the city he was met by several local spirits of the region and the tutelary deities of the city, all saluting. "Why did you all wait until now to come to see me?" asked Pilgrim.

"These humble deities," replied the city god, "knew already that the Great Sage had descended upon the Jade-Flower County. Since you've been entertained by a worthy prince, we dared not intrude upon you. Now we've learned that the princes encountered fiends and that the Great Sage is in the process of subduing demons. We've therefore come especially to salute to receive you."

Pilgrim was still annoyed and was beginning to berate them when the Golden-Headed Guardian, the 6 Gods of Darkness, and the 6 Gods of Light appeared with another local spirit in their custody. As they knelt down, they said, "Great Sage, we've captured this devil-in-the-earth and brought him here."

"Why aren't you all protecting my master at the Bamboo-Knot Mountain?" snapped Pilgrim. "Why are you milling about at this place?"

One of the gods of Darkness and Light said, "Great Sage, after you had escaped, the monster-spirit captured again the Curtain-Raising General and had him tied up once more. When we saw how powerful his magic was, we rounded up the local spirit of the Bamboo-Knot Mountain and marched him here. He should know the origin of this monster-spirit. Let the Great Sage question him, so that he may devise the proper means to rescue the sage monk and deliver the worthy prince from his suffering."

Pilgrim was delighted by what he heard. Trembling all over, the local spirit respected and said, "The year before last that old monster descended upon the Bamboo-Knot Mountain. The Nine-Bends Curved Cave was originally a den for six lions. Since the old monster's arrival however, the six lions all honoured him as their grandsire who is actually a nine-headed lion. He styles himself the Nine-Numina Primal Sage. If you want to vanquish him, you must go to the Wondrous-Cliff Palace at the East Pole and fetch his master. Only that person and no one else has the power to subdue him."

When he heard this, Pilgrim thought for quite some time, musing to himself: "The Wondrous-Cliff Palace at the East Pole, that's the Salvific Celestial Worthy of the Great Monad. His beast of burden is precisely a nine-headed lion. In that case..." He at once gave this instruction: "Let the Guardian and the gods of Darkness and Light return with the local spirit to their proper stations to provide secret protection for my master, my brothers, and the princes of the district. The city deities should take up their post to guard the city." The various deities obeyed and left.

Mounting the cloud somersault, Great Sage journeyed through the night. By about the hour of the Tiger,<sup>4</sup> he arrived at the East Heaven Gate where he ran into Deity-King Virūpākṣa and an entourage of celestial guards and vīra. They all stopped and, folding their hands in their sleeves to salute him, asked, "Where are you going, Great Sage?"

After returning their salutation, Pilgrim said, "Making a trip to Wondrous-Cliff Palace."

"Why aren't you on your way to the Western Heaven?" asked the Deity-King. "Why have you come to the Eastern Heaven?"

"When we arrived at the Jade-Flower County," replied Pilgrim, "we're royally entertained by the prince. His three sons in fact took us three brothers in and honoured us as teachers of martial arts. Little did we expect that we'd end up with a bunch of lion-fiends. I've just found out that the Salvific Celestial Worthy of the Great Monad at the Wondrous-Cliff Palace is the lion master, and I'd like to ask him to subdue the fiend and rescue my master."

"It's precisely because you desired to act as someone's teacher,"<sup>5</sup> said the Deity-King, "that you got into trouble with a den of lions."

"No doubt that's the reason! No doubt that's the reason!" chuckled Pilgrim.

All the soldiers and vīra saluted him again with folded hands and stepped aside to let him pass. After the Great Sage entered the East Heavenly Gate, he reached in a little while the Wondrous-Cliff Palace. He saw *coloured clouds in tiers, billows of purple mist, tiles shimmering in golden flames, doors guarded by rows of jade-beasts. Flowers fill a double arch swathed in red mist; tall trees, sun-drenched, are encased in green dew. Truly myriad gods surround the place where all sages flourish. The buildings are layers of brocade, all joined through windows and porches, watched by an old dragon circling in light divine and charged with thick, auspicious air. This is the realm of everlasting bliss, the Palace of Wondrous-Cliff.* Inside the gate of the palace stood a divine lad wearing a garment of rainbow hues. When he caught sight of the Great Sage Sun, he went inside to announce, "Holy Dad, the Great Sage Equal to Heaven who caused great havoc in the Celestial Palace's arrived."

The Salvific Celestial Worthy of the Great Monad at once asked his guards and attendants to usher his visitor in. When they entered the palace, the Celestial Worthy left his lofty lotus throne of nine colours enshrouded in countless beams of auspicious radiance to greet them. Pilgrim saluted low, and the Celestial Worthy returned his salutation, saying, "Great Sage, we've not seen you these few years. I heard some time ago that you left the Dao to embrace God in order to escort the Tang Monk to acquire scriptures in the Western Heaven. Your merit and work must have been accomplished."

"Not quite," replied Pilgrim, "but they're near completion. At this moment however, my accompaniment of the Tang Monk has taken us to the Jade-Flower County where the local prince was kind enough to have his three sons take old monkey and his brothers as teachers of martial arts. New weapons were being forged, using ours as models but they were stolen by a thief at night. When we looked for them in the morning, we learned that the thief was a golden-haired lion-spirit residing in the Tiger's-Mouth Cave on the Leopard's-Head Mountain north of the city. A ploy of old monkey got back our weapons but that spirit banded together with a considerable number of other lion-spirits to brawl with me. In their midst was a nine-headed lion who possessed vast magic powers. He caught with his mouths my master, 8 Rules, and the four princes and took them to the Nine-Bends Curved Cave of the Bamboo-Knot Mountain. The next day old monkey and Sand-monk followed them there, and we too were captured. Old monkey was bound and beaten by him countless times but I was fortunate enough to have escaped, using my magic. They are still suffering at that place. Not until I questioned the local spirit of the region did I find out that the Celestial Worthy happens to be his master. I've come especially to ask you to subdue the monster and grant deliverance."

On hearing this, the Celestial Worthy immediately ordered his subordinates to fetch the lion page from the lion den and bring him forward for interrogation. The page however, was sleeping soundly and did not wake up until some of the gods had given him a few shakes. They dragged him up to the centre hall, and the Celestial Worthy asked, "Where's the lion?"

Shedding tears and respecting, the page boy could only mutter, "Spare me! Spare me!"

"In the Great Sage Sun's presence you'll not be beaten," said the Celestial Worthy. "But you'd better confess quickly how you carelessly allowed the nine-headed lion to run away."

"Holy Dad," said the page, "the day before yesterday I came upon a bottle of juice in the Hall of Universal Sweet Dew. Not knowing any better, I stole it and drank it, and I fell fast asleep. I must not have locked up the beast properly, and that's why he escaped."

The Celestial Worthy said, "That juice happened to be a gift of Laozi called Jade Liquid of Transmigration. If you drank it, you'd stay drunk for three whole days. How many days has it been since the lion ran away?"

"According to the local spirit," said the Great Sage, "he descended to earth the year before last. By now it's almost three years."

"Yes! Yes!" said the Celestial Worthy with a smile. "A day in Heaven is a year in the mortal world." Then he said to the lion page, "Get up. We'll spare you for the moment. Follow me and the Great Sage to the Region Below to retrieve him. The rest of the mortals may go back. There's no need for all of you to accompany us."

The Celestial Worthy trod the clouds with the lion page and the Great Sage to reach the Bamboo-Knot Mountain where they were met by the Guardians of Five Quarters, the Six Gods of Darkness and the Six Gods of Light, and the local spirit of the mountain. "You who are supposed to be guardians, has my master been harmed?" asked Pilgrim.

"The monster-spirit," replied the deities, "has been rather upset and has gone to sleep. He has not inflicted punishment on anyone."

"After all," said the Celestial Worthy, "that Child Primal Sage of mine is a true spirit who has attained the Way through prolonged cultivation. One roar of his can reach the Three Sages above and penetrate the Nine Springs down below. He will not take a life casually. Great Sage Sun, please go and provoke battle at his door. Entice him to come out so that I may subdue him."

Hearing this, Pilgrim indeed whipped out his rod and leaped toward the cave's entrance, shouting, "Brazen monster-spirit! Return my people! Brazen monster-spirit! Return my people!" He shouted several times but there was no answer at all, for the old monster had fallen fast asleep. Growing impatient, Pilgrim wielded his iron rod and fought his way inside, shouting abuses as he moved along. Only then was the old monster roused from his sleep. Startled and enraged, he scrambled up and roared, "To battle!" At once he shook his head and attacked with open mouths.

Pilgrim turned back and leaped out of the cave. The monster-spirit followed him out, crying, "Monkey thief! Where are you going?"

Standing on a cliff, Pilgrim said, chuckling, "You still dare be so audacious and unruly! You've no idea what's coming to you in a moment! Don't you realise that your Venerable Dad Master is here?"

The monster-spirit rushed up to the cliff, only to find a Celestial Worthy reciting a spell and shouting, "Child Primal Sage, I'm here!" The monster recognised his master, and he dared not struggle at all. Falling salute on all fours, he could only respect repeatedly. From one side the lion page dashed out and, seizing his hair on the neck with one hand, rained blows on his head with the other. "You beast!" he scolded him. "Why did you run away and make me suffer?"

The lion dared neither move nor utter a word. Only when his fist grew tired did the lion page stop punching and put the brocade saddle on. The Celestial Worthy mounted him, gave the order to leave, and the lion rode the coloured clouds to return to the Wondrous-Cliff Palace.

After giving thanks toward the sky, the Great Sage entered the cave. He untied the Jade-Flower prince first, then Tripitaka Tang, and finally, 8 Rules, Sand-monk, and the three princes. Together they looted the cave's valuables before stepping outside. 8 Rules piled up dried wood front and back and started a blaze. The entire Nine-Bends Curved Cave was reduced to a charred and gutted kiln! Then the Great Sage dismissed the other deities, though he ordered the local spirit to remain there and guard the region. 8 Rules and Sand-monk were told to exercise their magic and carry the princes back to the prefectural city on their backs while Pilgrim himself took hold of the Tang Monk by the hands to transport him. In a short while, when the sky darkened, they all arrived at the capital and were met by the queen, the palace ladies, and various officials. Evening maigre was served at once, and they all sat down to enjoy the fare. The elder and his disciples again rested in the Gauze-Drying Pavilion while the prince retired to the palace. They all had a peaceful night.

The next day the prince ordered another huge vegetarian banquet, for which all the officials of the palace, high and low, gave thanks. Pilgrim also asked the butchers to slaughter the six lions and skin them, as they had done to the yellow lion. Their meat was to be prepared for the people's enjoyment. Delighted by this suggestion, the prince at once gave this command: the meat of one lion was to be saved for the residents of the palace, and that of another would be given to the Administrator of a Princely Establishment and other district officials. The rest of the five lions would be cut into small pieces, about two to three ounces each, and distributed by palace guards to the civilian and military populace in and out of the city, so that they might have a taste of lion meat to calm their fears. All the households thus acknowledged the gift with gratitude.

In the meantime, the ironsmiths had finished forging the three weapons. As they respected to Pilgrim, they said, "Holy Dad, our work is done."

"What's the weight of each of the weapons?" asked Pilgrim.

"The golden-hooped rod weighs a thousand pounds," replied one of the ironsmiths. "The nine-pronged rake and the fiend-routing staff both weigh eight hundred pounds."

"All right," said Pilgrim and he asked the three princes to come out and pick up their weapons.

"Dad Prince," said the three princes to the old prince, "today the weapons are perfected."

"Because of them," said the old prince, "my sons and I almost lost our lives."

"It was fortunate that the divine master did exercise his magic to have us rescued," said the young princes, "and to have the monstrous deviates dispersed. With all evil consequences removed, we may truly expect a peaceful world of calm seas and clear rivers." At once the old prince rewarded the ironsmiths; then dad and sons went to the Gauze-Drying Pavilion to thank the masters.

In order that their journey would not be delayed, Tripitaka urged Pilgrim and his companions to hasten in giving lessons in martial arts to the princes. Right in the palace courtyard, therefore, each of the brothers wielded his weapon and began instructing the princes one by one. In a few days those three princes became thoroughly familiar with their drills and exercises. All the methods of offence and defence, fast and slow, indeed all seventy-two styles of movement that belonged to each weapon were mastered. The three princes, after all, were most determined to learn, and, moreover, the Great Sage Sun had endowed them with divine strength. For this reason they could now raise and move a thousand-pound rod or an eight-hundred-pound muckrake. Compared with the martial arts they formerly practiced by themselves, this was something else indeed! A testimonial poem says:

*Good luck for them has 3 teachers convened. Why'd martial arts bestir a lion fiend?*  
*The empire's safe when pervers are wiped out; they yield to 1 Body and pariahs<sup>6</sup> rout.*  
*9<sup>7</sup> fits the principle of primal yang; from all perfection the Dao truly sprang.*  
*A mind informed these teachings ever release, grant Jade-Flower lasting joy, and peace.*

Once more the princes gave a huge banquet to thank their teachers for the instruction. A large platter of silver and gold was also presented as token of their gratitude. "Take it away! Quickly!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "We're people who have left home. What do we need it for?"

8 Rules sitting to one side, said, "We really can't take the gold and silver. But this robe of mine's been torn almost to shreds by those lion-spirits. If you'd provide us with a change of clothing, it'd be received as a token of your great love for us."

The princes at once asked the tailors, "Take several bales of blue, red, brown silk following the styles, and colours of what the priests were wearing make 3 suits of clothing." The 3 pilgrims received their gifts gladly and put on their new cassocks of silk before packing to leave. At this time there was not a single person in and out of the city who did not address them as incarnate Arhats or living gods. All the streets were filled with the sounds of drums and poems and clogged with the colours of banners and pennants. Truly *outside each household the incense fires burned; before each door colourful lanterns turned*. Only after escorting the pilgrims a long distance would the people permit the 4 of them to resume their journey toward the West. Their departure signalled their escape from the various lions and their devotion to attaining the right fruit. Truly *without a worry they'd reach God's realm and with hearts unfeigned, ascend Thunderclap*.

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**At Gold-Level Prefecture they watch lanterns on the 15<sup>th</sup> night; in Mysterious Flower Cave the Tang Monk makes a deposition**

*How'd 1 strive in the practice of Chan? Cut off quickly the wily horse and ape.*  
*5 colours grow when they are firmly bound; a moment's stop will land you on 3 Ways.<sup>1</sup>*  
*If the sovereign elixir's caused to leak, jade nature dries up for such sloth and slack.*  
*Joy, wrath, care, and thought must be swept clean: wondrous mystery is gained like nothing seen.<sup>2</sup>*

We're just telling you about the Tang Monk and his 3 disciples who left the Jade-Flower City and proceeded along a path safe and sound. In truth the region befitted the name of Ultimate Bliss. After five or six days, they again caught sight of a city. "What sort of a place is this again?" the Tang Monk asked Pilgrim.

"It's a city," replied Pilgrim, "but the flagpole on the rampart has no pennant. We can't tell the name of this region. Let's wait till we get near, and ask."

When they reached the suburb outside the eastern gate, they saw bustling teahouses and juice shops on both sides of the street, and flourishing rice markets and oil stores. On the streets there were a few vagabonds; when they saw the long horn of Bullseye 8 Rules, the gloomy countenance of Sand-monk, and the red-rimmed eyes of Pilgrim Sun, they had the travellers surrounded. Struggling to get a closer look at these strange visitors, they nonetheless did not have the courage to question them. The Tang Monk was so nervous that he was, as it were, clinging onto his own sweat, for he feared that his disciples might cause trouble. They walked past several more alley entrances but still they had not reached the city. It was then that they came upon the gate of a monastery with this inscription: Mercy Cloud Temple. "How about going in there to rest the horse," said the Tang Monk, "and beg for a meal?"

"Good! Good!" replied Pilgrim and the 4 of them all walked in. They saw *noble treasure towers, soaring bejewelled thrones, a god alcove above the clouds, and priestly chambers within the moon.*  
*<sup>3</sup>Misty red swirls about tall pagodas; dark green trees enshroud clean praying-wheels. A true pure land, a false dragon palace, a Great Hero Hall encased in purple cloud. Along 2 porches endless visitors play; guests climb a heap that's often open. Incense in the censers is ever ablaze; fragrant lamps nightly on the platforms glow. When the golden bell's heard from the abbot hall, monks in service to God will Threads recite.* As the 4 of them looked at the place, they caught sight of a priest walking out from 1 of the corridors. "Master where did you come from?"

He saluted the Tang Monk. "This disciple happens to be someone who came from the Tang court of China," replied the Tang Monk.

At once the monk raised his hand to make a salute so startling the Tang Monk that he hurriedly tried to raise him with his hands. "Abbot," he asked, "why do you honour me with such a grand ceremony?" Pressing his palms together in front of him, the monk said, "When those people inclined to virtue at our region study the *Threads* and recite the name of God, their ardent hope's invariably to find disciple at your land of China. Just now when I beheld the bearing and clothing of the venerable master, I realised at once that only the cultivation of a previous life could provide you with such noble endowment. It's fitting therefore for me to raise my hand to salute you."

"I'm terribly embarrassed!" said the Tang Monk with a smile. "This disciple is but a mendicant. What endowment could he claim? The abbot here is able to enjoy a quiet and comfortable existence. That's true blessing!"

The monk thereupon led the Tang Monk to the main hall to worship the images of God. Only after that did the Tang Monk summon his disciples to enter. Pilgrim and his two companions had been standing with their faces turned away to watch the horse and luggage since their master had begun conversing with the priest. The priest thus did not pay them much attention. Not until they heard their master calling, "Disciples!" did they turn around. When the priest saw them, he was so aghast that he cried, "O Holy Dad! Why is it that your noble disciples are so ugly?"

"Though they may be ugly," replied the Tang Monk, "they do possess considerable magic power. Throughout our journey I've been quite dependent on their protection."

As they chatted, several more priests walked out to salute them. The one who appeared previously said to the ones who just arrived, "This master is a person who came from the Great Tang of China. These three are his noble disciples." Both pleased and alarmed, the monks said, "Master, why did you come here from your great nation of China?"

"By the sage decree of our Tang emperor," declared the Tang Monk. "I'm seeking scriptures from a god at Spirit Mountain. Passing through your treasure region, I've come especially to your superior temple, merely to inquire about the place and to beg for a meal. Thereafter we'll leave."



Each one of those monks was delighted. They invited the pilgrims into the abbot’s quarters where there were several more priests conducting business with some donors of a vegetarian feast. One of those monks who walked in first cried, “All of you come and look at people from China. Now we know there are both handsome people and ugly people in China. The handsome is too handsome to be sketched or painted but the ugly ones are exceedingly bizarre.”

Many of those monks and feast donors came to greet them. They then took their seats, and, after tea, the Tang Monk asked, “What is the name of your honoured region?”

“Our is the outer prefecture of the Kingdom of India,” replied one of the monks, “the Gold-Level Prefecture.”

“How far is it from your honoured prefecture to the Spirit Mountain?” asked the Tang Monk.

“It is about two thousand miles from here to the capital,” said the monk, “and this is a journey we ourselves have taken before. But we’ve never gone westward to the Spirit Mountain, and, not knowing the distance, we dare not offer you a fraudulent reply.” The Tang Monk thanked him.

In a little while, they brought out a vegetarian meal, after which, the Tang Monk wanted to leave. He was however, detained by the donors and the monks who said to him, “Please feel free to stay for a couple of days, Venerable Master. Enjoy yourself till we’ve passed the Lantern Festival. Then you may go.”

Somewhat taken aback, the Tang Monk said, “All this disciple knows on the road’s that there’re mountains and waters. What I fear most is running into fiends and demons. I’ve quite lost track of time. When is the fine Lantern Festival?”

Smiling, 1 of the monks said, “The venerable master’s preoccupied with the worship of God and the realisation of Chan and that’s why you’ve no concept of time. Today happens to be the thirteenth of the first month. By night the people will be trying out the lanterns. The day after tomorrow’s the fifteenth proper. We don’t put away the lanterns until the eighteenth or nineteenth. The households of our region here’re quite active and fond of excitement. Moreover, our prefect holds the people in great affection. So lanterns and lights will be set up high all over the place and there’ll be poems all night long. We’ve also a Golden-Lamp Bridge, a relic of antiquity but still a prosperous site. Let the venerable dads stay here for a few days. Our humble monastery can certainly take care of you.”

The Tang Monk had no choice but to remain. That night a great salvo of drums and bells could be heard coming from the main hall of God when the faithful and the local residents arrived with their gifts and votive lanterns for God. The Tang Monk and his companions all left the abbot’s quarters to watch these lanterns before retiring. The next day temple priests brought in more food. When they had finished eating, they took a stroll together through the rear garden. *A fine place indeed! The time is the first month; the season, a new spring. A fine, wooded garden of charms luxuriant. Rare blooms and plants of four seasons; rows upon rows of summits. <sup>4</sup>Before the steps lovely grasses stir; on old plum boughs fragrance rises. The red enters young peach blossoms; the green returns to fresh willows. Boast not of Gold-Valley’s<sup>s</sup> opulence speak not of Felloe-Spring’s<sup>s</sup> soft breezes. Here’s one flowing stream where wild ducks appear now and then; 1000 bamboos planted on which the writers make no end of verses. The peony, the tree-peony, the crape flower, the magnolia – their natures have just awakened. The camellia, the red plum, the jasmine, the most fragrant plant! they first display their glamour. Though snow left on shady ledges retains its chill, distant trees with mist afloat are brushed with spring. See, too deer glancing at their pond-reflections and cranes listening to strings beneath the pines. A few buildings to the east and west where guests may come to stay; a few halls to the south, a few heaps to the north where monks in silence meditate. In the midst of flowers there are a couple of towers for cultivation, their double eaves curving high up; amid hills and streams are 3 or 4 demon-smelting rooms with neat tables and bright lattices. Truly a natural place of reclusion, there’s no need to look elsewhere for Peng and Ying.* After enjoying the garden for a day, master and disciples also looked at the lanterns in the halls before going to watch the lantern shows. What they saw were *comelian floral cities, glass mortal-caves, palaces of crystal and mum-of-pearl like layers of brocade and tiers of openwork carvings. As the star-bridge sways and the cosmos moves, see how a few flaming trees waver. Pipes and drums along the 6 streets, a bright moon atop 1000 doors, and scented breeze from all households. Here and there scorpionfish humps rear up; there are dragons leaving the ocean and phoenixes soaring. Admire both lamplight and moonlight – what harmonious blend!*

*Those troops of satin and silk all enjoy the sounds of pipe and poem; atop both chariots, horses there is no end of flower, and jade-like faces, gallant knights, or lovely scenes.* After Tripitaka and the monks had watched the lanterns in the monastery, they also took to the streets of the suburb by the east gate to see the sights. Not until the time of the second watch did they turn back to retire. The next day the Tang Monk said to the priests, “This disciple once made a vow<sup>8</sup> to sweep a pagoda whenever I came upon a pagoda. Since this day is the fine festival of the first full moon, let me request the abbot to open the pagoda for me to fulfil my vow.” The priests accordingly opened the door, as Sand-monk took out the cassock to attend to the Tang Monk. When they reached the first level, the elder put on the cassock to worship God and say prayers. Thereafter he swept out that level with a broom before taking off the cassock to hand back to Sand-monk. He then swept clean the second level and went through each one in that manner until he reached the very top. On each level of that pagoda there were images of God and open windows. When one level was swept clean, the Tang Monk and his companions would remain a while to enjoy and commend the scenery. By the time the work was done, and they descended from the pagoda, it was already late, and lamps had to be lit. This was the night of the fifteenth, the first full moon. “Venerable Master,” said the priests, “we’ve been watching the lanterns with you these last two nights in our monastery and in the suburb. Tonight’s the festival proper. How about going into the city with us to watch the lanterns there?” In delight the Tang Monk agreed. With the monks of the monastery, he and his 3 disciples all entered the city. Truly it is *15<sup>th</sup>, a lovely night and feast; spring hues blend with the first full moon. Floral lights overhang busy shops as people recite the poems of peace. You see only bright lights in the 6 streets and 3 marts when a mirror rises in mid-air. The moon seems like a silver dish the River-God pushed up; the lights look like brocade carpets woven by divine maidens. The lights in moonlight add 1 measure of light; the moon shines on the lights, enhancing their brilliance. There are countless iron chains, star-bridges to see, and endless lamp wicks and flaming torches to watch. The snowflake lantern and the plum-flower lantern seem to be chiselled from spring ice. The silk-screen lantern and the painted-screen lantern are constructed with 5 colours. The walnut lantern and the lily lantern hang high on the tower. The green-lion lantern and the white-elephant lantern frolic high by the awnings. The little-lamb lantern and the rabbit lantern sparkle beneath the eaves. The hawk lantern and the phoenix lantern are joined side by side. The tiger lantern and the horse lantern walk and run together. The divine-crane lantern and the white-deer lantern, these Longevity Star rides on. The goldfish lantern and the long-whale lantern, these Li Bo will sit on. The scorpionfish-hump lantern—a congregation of mortals. A revolving-horse lantern – where generals do battle. 1000 households of glittering towers; many miles of a world of cloud and smoke. Over there clip-petty-clop come the jade saddles flying; over here the rumbling wheels of scented chariots pass by. Look at those in red-trimmed towers: leaning on the rails behind the screens shoulder to shoulder pairs and pairs of beauties eager for pleasure. Or those by the bridge over green waters: noisily cavorting all bundled in silk besotted and soused in loud guffaws 2 by 2 the tourists play in happy garments. Flutes and drums resound in the whole city; pipes and poems rend the air throughout the night.* Also a testimonial poem says:

*From fields of brocade comes the lotus poem to this peaceful region flocks a great throng.  
With bright lights and moon on this 15<sup>th</sup> eve, timely rain and wind the year will receive.*

Since this was precisely the time the nocturnal curfew was to be lifted, countless people mingled and milled about the place. Some were dancing; some were walking on stilts; there were people disguised as ghosts and others riding on elephants – a bunch here and a cluster there. You’d hardly watch them all. When the Tang Monk and the other priests finally made their way to the Golden-Lamp Bridge, they came upon three lamps with bases the size of cisterns. The coverings on top were actually two artificial towered edifices knit in the most elegant and delicate fashion with fine gold threads. Suspended inside the edifices were thin pieces of glass. The light of these lamps could rival the moon’s while their oil emitted powerful aromas. The Tang Monk turned to ask the priests, “What sort of oil do these lamps use? Why does it have such a powerful, strange fragrance?”

“I’d tell you, Venerable Master,” replied one of the priests, “about the district behind our prefecture that is called Compassionate-Heaven. This district covers some two hundred and forty square miles. Supporting the annual land taxes of this district are two hundred and forty so-called oil families. Mind you, the other taxes of the district are manageable but the ones levied on these families are quite burdensome. Each household in fact must spend over two hundred taels of silver on the oil for these lamps that is no ordinary oil. It is a specially blended fragrant oil, and each tael is worth two taels of silver. Each catty of oil thus would cost thirty-six taels of silver. The cistern of each of those three lamps holds up to five hundred catties, so three lamps would require fifteen hundred catties of oil. The fuel itself therefore would cost forty-eight thousand taels of silver. Other miscellaneous expenses would push the total sum to over fifty thousand. The lamps however, can only last three nights.”

“How’d you burn up so much oil in just three nights?” asked Pilgrim.

The priest answered, “There are forty-nine large wicks in each of the cisterns. They are made of wick-straw tied together and wrapped in fine cotton. Each wick is actually about as thick as a chicken egg but they can last only through this night. After Dad God has revealed himself, the oil will have disappeared by tomorrow evening and the lamps will go dim.”

“It must be,” giggled 8 Rules, from the side, “that Dad God takes away even the oil!”

“Exactly!” replied the priest. “This has been the belief handed down from antiquity by the people of the entire city. Because the oil dries up, people all say that the Religious Patriarch himself has put away the lamps, and that ensures a rich harvest of the five grains. If however, there is a year when the oil does not dry up, then there will be droughts or poor harvests or wind and rain out of season. That is the reason why all the families feel compelled to make these sacrifices.”

As they spoke, the howl of wind could suddenly be heard up in the sky, so terrifying the lamp spectators that they all scattered. The priests, too, found it difficult to stand on their feet. “Venerable Master,” they said, “let’s go back. The wind has arrived. It must be Dad God’s auspicious descent, coming here to watch the lamps.”

“How do you know it’s God coming to watch the lamps?” asked the Tang Monk.

“It’s like this every year,” replied one of the monks. “Hardly past the hour of the third watch, the wind arrived. Knowing that it’s the auspicious descent of the various Gods, people all get out of the way.”

“This disciple,” said the Tang Monk, “happens to be a person who thinks of God who recites the name of God, and who worships God. If there are indeed Gods making their descent on this fine occasion, I’ll certainly pay them homage. Even a small gesture is desirable.”

The priests begged in vain for him to leave. In a little while, three figures of God indeed appeared in the wind, coming toward the lamps. The Tang Monk was so astonished that he rushed up to the top of the bridge and raised his hand to salute them. Hurrying forward to try to pull him up, Pilgrim shouted, “Master, these aren’t good people! They’ve to be monstrous deviates!” Hardly had he finished speaking than the lamp light suddenly grew dim. With a loud whoosh, they scooped up the Tang Monk and left astride the wind. *Alas! Of which mountain or cave are these real fiends, false gods who for years have watched the gold lamps is unknown.* So terrified were 8 Rules and Sand-monk that they searched and hollered left and right. “Brothers!” Pilgrim cried. “No need to call for Master at this place. His extreme pleasure’s turned to grief and Master’s been abducted by monster-spirits.”

“Holy Dad!” said those few frightened monks. “How’d you tell that monster-spirits abducted him?”

With a chuckle, Pilgrim said, “All of you’re a bunch of mortals. You’ve no perception all these years, for you’re deluded by those monstrous deviates. All you thought of were true Gods making their auspicious descent to enjoy these offerings of the lamps. Just now when the wind passed by, those apparitions of God were actually three monster-spirits. Unable to recognise them either, my master dashed to the top of the bridge and immediately saluted down. They managed to dim the lights, took away the oil with some vessels, and even abducted our master. I was a bit slow in getting up there, and that’s why the three of them could escape by changing into the wind.”

“Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “what are we going to do, then?”

“No need for hesitation,” replied Pilgrim. “The two of you go back to the temple with the rest of them to guard our horse and luggage. Let old monkey make use of this wind and track them down.” *Dear Great Sage!* Swiftly mounting the cloud somersault, he rose to mid-air and, catching a whiff of putrid odour from that wind, sped toward the northeast. He chased it till dawn and all at once the wind died down. Then he came upon a huge mountain that appeared most treacherous and truly rugged. *Marvellous mountain! Canyons in layers and torrents tortuous. From sheer cliffs hang vines and creepers; on hollow heights stand cypress and pine. The cranes cackle in morning mist and geese call from the clouds of dawn. Tall and erect like halberds are the peaks; jagged and rough huge boulders pile up. The summit soars 10000 feet; the peak rises in 1000 turns. Conscious of spring, wild woods and flowers bloom; moved by the sights, nightjars and orioles recite. It may seem lofty and grand, it’s in truth a precipice that’s bizarre, rugged, treacherous, and hard. Stop and enjoy it but no man’s in sight: heard are only tigers and leopards growl. Musk and white deer will wander as they please; jade hare and green wolves will come and go. A deep brook flows out to 1000 miles, its eddies gurgling as they strike the rocks.* On the mountain ledge the Great Sage was searching for his way when he caught sight of four persons herding 3 goats down the western slope and shouting, “Begins Prosperity!” Blinking his fiery eyes with diamond pupils, the Great Sage stared more carefully and perceived that they were the 4 Sentinels of Year, Month, Day, and Hour approaching in disguises. Immediately whipping out his iron rod that attained the thickness of a rice bowl and a length of about 12 feet with 1 wave, the Great Sage leaped down from the ledge and shouted, “Where do you dirty sneaks think you’re going?”

When the 4 Sentinels saw that he had penetrated their disguises, they were so terrified that they shooed away the goats and changed back into their true forms. Stepping to the side of the road to give their salutes, they said, “Great Sage, please forgive us!”

“Because I’ve not asked for your services for a long time,” said Pilgrim, “you think Old monkey’s become indulgent. Every one of you in fact’s turned slothful since you’ve not shown up once to present yourself to me. What do you’ve to say to that? Why aren’t you all giving secret protection to my master? Where’re you off to?”

“Your master’s backslid a little,” replied one of the Sentinels. “Because he’s been indulging in pleasures at the Mercy Cloud Temple of the Gold-Level Prefecture, his extreme prosperity’s produced negativity and the fullness of his happiness’s become grief. Now he’s been captured by some monstrous deviates but at least he has the Guardians of Monastery at his side to give him protection. We know that the Great Sage’s been giving chase all through the night. Fearing that the Great Sage might not know his way in this mountain forest, we’ve come especially to make it known to you.”

“If you wanted to do that,” said Pilgrim, “why did you do it in such a secretive manner? Herding three goats and shouting this and that – what for?”

The Sentinel said, “We brought along these three goats in order to symbolize the saying, ‘With three yang begins prosperity.’<sup>9</sup> That symbol should break up and dispel your master’s misfortune.”

Pilgrim was angrily threatening to beat them but when he heard their intention, his anger turned to delight, and he decided to spare them. Putting away his rod, he said, "Is this the mountain where the monster-spirit lives?"

"Indeed, it is," replied the Sentinel. "This is the Green Dragon Mountain, in which there is a Mysterious Flower Cave. Inside the cave are three monster-spirits: the eldest is named Great King Cold-Deterrent; the second, Great King Heat-Deterrent; and the third, Great King Dust-Deterrent. They have lived here for a millennium. Since their youth they have been fond of eating that specially blended fragrant oil. When they became spirits in years past, they came here disguised as the images of God to dupe the officials and people of the Gold-Level Prefecture into setting up these golden lamps and using that specially blended fragrant oil as fuel. By mid-month of the first month every year, they would assume the forms of God to collect oil. When they saw your master this year, they recognised that he had the body of a sage monk and they abducted him into their cave. In no time they will want to cut off your master's flesh and sauté it with that fragrant oil for food. You must work quickly to rescue him."

On hearing this, Pilgrim dismissed the Four Sentinels and went past the mountain ledge to search for the cave. He had not gone more than a few miles when he came upon a huge boulder, beneath which a stone house with two was half-closed stone doors. By the side of the door was a stone tablet with these six words: Green Dragon Mountain, Mysterious Flower Cave. Not daring to walk straight in, Pilgrim stood still and called out, "Monstrous fiend, send my master out quickly!"

With a loud creak the doors were flung open and out ran several bull-headed spirits. Rather glumly and stupidly, they asked, "Who are you that you dare make all these noises here?"

"I'm the senior disciple of the sage monk, Tripitaka Tang," replied Pilgrim, "who was sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to seek scriptures. We passed through the Gold-Level Prefecture, and while we're watching the lanterns, my master was kidnapped by your household's demon chieftains. Return him early, and I'll spare your lives! If you don't, I'll overturn your den and reduce you spirits to pus and blood!"

On hearing this, those little monsters hurried inside to say, "Great Kings, disaster! Disaster!" The three old monsters had brought the Tang Monk deep into the cave where without any further interrogation they were ordering their subordinates to have him stripped and scrubbed clean by water pumped from the well. They were making plans, too, to cut him or dice him so that his flesh could be sautéed for food with that specially blended fragrant oil. When they suddenly heard this announcement of disaster, Number One was astonished enough to ask why.

"In front of our main door," replied one of the little monsters, "there is a monk with a hairy face and a thunder-god beak. He claims that our Great Kings have abducted his master to this place and demands that he be sent out at once. Then he'll spare our lives. But if we don't do that, he will overturn our den and reduce us all to pus and blood."

All alarmed by what they heard, the older monsters said, "We just caught this fellow, and we've not yet had a chance to question him about his name or where he came from. Little ones, put his clothes back on him and bring him over here for us to interrogate him. Who is he anyway, and where does he come from?"

The monsters rushed forward and untied the Tang Monk. After they had dressed him, they pushed him before the seats of the old monsters. Trembling all over, the Tang Monk knelt down and could only cry, "Great Kings, spare me! Please spare me!"

"Where did you come from, monk?" asked the three monster-spirits in unison. "When you saw the forms of God, why did you not step aside? Why did you impede our cloudy path?"

As he respected, the Tang Monk said, "This humble cleric is someone sent by the Throne of the Great Tang in the Land of the East, someone on his way to seek scriptures from the Religious Patriarch at the Great Thunderclap Monastery in the Kingdom of India. Because I went to the Mercy Cloud Temple at the Gold-Level Prefecture to beg for a meal, I was asked by the priests of that temple to stay through the Lantern Festival and enjoy the lights. When the Great Kings revealed themselves in the forms of God on the Golden-Lamp Bridge, this humble cleric who has only fleshly eyes and mortal frame, nonetheless has the desire to worship God whenever he beholds his image. That is the reason why I impeded your cloudy path."

"It is a long way from your Land of the East to this place," said those monster-spirits. "How many people are there altogether in your entourage? Tell us quickly, and we'll spare your life."

"My secular name is Chen Xuanzang," replied the Tang Monk, "and I've been raised a monk in the Gold Mountain Monastery since my youth. Later I was appointed a monk official by the Tang emperor at the Temple of Great Blessing. On account of Prime Minister Wei Zheng's execution of an old dragon of the Jing River in his dream, the Tang emperor made a tour of Hades and then returned to life."

To provide redemption for the lost souls of darkness, he convened the Grand Mass of Land and Water and graciously selected me as the chief priest in charge of the ceremony and the exposition of scriptures. It was at that time that the Nun Guanshiyin revealed herself to enlighten this humble cleric, announcing to us that there were three canons of true scriptures at the Great Thunderclap Monastery in the Western Heaven. These scriptures, she said, could provide deliverance for the deceased and enable them to ascend to Heaven. The Tang emperor therefore sent this humble cleric to fetch the scriptures. He bestowed on me the style, Tripitaka, and the surname of Tang. That's why people all address me as Tripitaka Tang. I've three disciples. The first one's surname is Sun, and his names are Wukong and Pilgrim. He is actually the converted Great Sage Equal to Heaven."

Greatly startled by the last name they heard, the monsters said, "Is this Great Sage Equal to Heaven, the person who caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace five centuries ago?"

"Indeed, he is," said the Tang Monk. "My second disciple has the surname of Bullseye, and his given names are Aware of Ability and 8 Rules. He is the disciple of the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. My third disciple has the surname of Sha, and his given names are Awakened to Purity and Monk. He is the Curtain-Raising General who has descended to Earth."

When they heard this, all three of those monster-kings were alarmed. "It's a good thing we've not eaten him yet," they said. "Little ones, let's chain the Tang Monk in the rear. Let's wait till we capture his three disciples so that we can eat them together." Then they called up a herd of spirits, all mountain buffaloes, water buffaloes, and yellow buffaloes. Each grasping a weapon, they walked out of the front door where with a trumpet signal, they waved their banners and rolled the drums.

In full battle dress, the 3 monsters went out the door also and cried, "What person is bold enough to shout and yell in front of our door?"

Half concealed upon the boulder, Pilgrim stared at them. The monster-spirits all had coloured faces, round eyes, 2 rugged horns, 4 ears<sup>10</sup> most pointed, and sparkling intelligence; a body full of patterns like a coloured painting or a large piece of brocade with floral designs. The 1<sup>st</sup> 1 wears on his head a cap of warm fox fur; his face is steamy and covered with hair. The 2<sup>nd</sup> 1 has draped on himself thin gauze flaming red, his 4 patterned hooves resemble chunks of jade. The 3<sup>rd</sup> 1 has a mighty roar like a thunderclap, his jutting teeth seem sharper than silver picks. Each 1 bold and fierce, they hold 3 kinds of arms: 1 uses a battle-axe and a huge cutlass. But the 3<sup>rd</sup> 1: Look again!

Across his shoulders rests a knotty cane. He saw moreover many monster-spirits: tall, short, fat, thin, old, young, they were all bull-heads or demonic fiends holding spears, and clubs. There were 3 huge banners on which these titles were clearly inscribed: Great King Cold-Deterrent, Great King Heat-Deterrent, and Great King Dust-Deterrent. After he had stared for a while, Pilgrim could wait no longer. He went forward and shouted: "You lawless thieves and fiends! Do you recognise old monkey?"

"So you're the Sun Wukong who disturbed Heaven!" snapped 1 of the monsters. "Truly though your face's preceded by your fame, god who sees you'd die with shame! You're nothing but a puny ape!"

"You oil-stealing thieves!" scolded Pilgrim, enraged. "You greasy-mouthed fiends! Stop babbling! Return my master instantly!" He rushed forward and struck out with his iron rod. Those 3 old monsters met him swiftly with 3 kinds of weapon. That's some battle in the fold of the mountain! Battle-axe, cutlass, and a knotty cane the Monkey King dares oppose with 1 rod. The fiends – Cold, Heat, and Dust-Deterrent – now recognise the Great Sage Equal to Heaven's name. The rod rises to frighten gods and ghosts; the axe and cutlass madly fly and slash. What an image of true void magically fused that resists three monstrous, false-god-forms! Those 3 felons of this year who wet their noses with stolen oil are eager to seize the priest commissioned by a king. This 1 for his master fears not mountains or distance; those 3 for their mouths' sake want annual offerings. Bing-bang: only axe and cutlass are heard. Pi-po: now only the rod makes the sounds. Charging and bumping, three go against 1; each parries and blocks to display his might. From morning they fight till the time of night. Who knows who will suffer and who'll win?

With that single rod of his Pilgrim Sun fought the 3 demons for some 150 rounds but no decision had been reached when the sky began to darken. After a rather feeble blow of his knotty cane, the Great King Dust-Deterrent leaped across the battle line to wave his banner. Immediately that band of bull-headed fiends surged forward and had Pilgrim surrounded in the middle. All wielding weapons, they madly attacked him. Seeing that the tide was turning against him, Pilgrim mounted the cloud somersault and fled in defeat. Those monsters did not pursue him; calling back their subordinates, they prepared dinner instead and ate it. A little monster was ordered to give a bowlful to the Tang Monk who would not be prepared for cooking until Pilgrim was captured also. Because he had always kept a vegetarian diet and because he was racked by sorrow, the master did not even allow the food to touch his lips weeping. Pilgrim mounted the clouds to return to the Mercy Cloud Temple. "Brothers!" he called out.

8 Rules and Sand-monk were waiting for him. When they heard the call they came out together to meet him, saying, "Elder Brother, why did you go for a whole day before you came back? What actually happened to Master?"

"I followed the scent of the wind to give chase last night," replied Pilgrim with a smile, "and by morning, I arrived at a mountain. The wind vanished but luckily the Four Sentinels reported to me that the mountain was called the Green Dragon Mountain. In the mountain was a cave with the name of Mysterious Flower with three monster-spirits living inside it. They had the names of Great King Cold-Deterrent, Great King Heat-Deterrent, and Great King Dust-Deterrent. They had been stealing oil from this place for years, falsely assuming the form of God to deceive the officials and people of the Gold-Level Prefecture. This year they happened to bump into us, and, not knowing any better, went so far as to abduct Master. After old monkey had acquired this information, I ordered the Sentinels to give secret protection to Master while I provoked battle before the door. Those three fiends came out together, and they all seemed like bull-headed demons. One used a battle-axe, one a huge cutlass, and the third a cane. Behind them came a whole den of bull-headed demons, waving their banners and rolling their drums. Old monkey battled the three chieftains for an entire day, and we fought to a draw. Then one of the monster-kings waved his banner, and the little monsters all came at me. When I saw that it was getting late, I feared that I'd not prevail and I somersaulted back here."

"It must be demon kings from the Capital of Darkness causing trouble," said 8 Rules.

"What led you to make such a guess?" asked Sand-monk.

Chuckling, 8 Rules said, "Elder Brother told us that these were all bull-headed demons. That's how I know."

"No! No!" said Pilgrim. "As old monkey sees the matter, they are spirits of three rhinoceroses."

"If they are," said 8 Rules, "let's capture them and saw off their horns. They are worth quite a few taels of silver!"

As they were speaking, the monks of the temple came to ask whether Dad Sun would like dinner. "If it's convenient, I'll have some," replied Pilgrim. "If not, I can pass."

"Dad Sun has fought for an entire day," said a priest. "Aren't you hungry?"

"Just a day or so, how could I be hungry?" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Old monkey once had no taste of food or drink for five centuries!" Those priests however, thought he was only joking and presently they brought him food. After he had eaten, Pilgrim said, "Let's get ready to retire. Tomorrow we can all go together to do battle. When we capture the monster-kings, we can rescue Master."

"What are you saying, Elder Brother?" asked Sand-monk. "As the proverb has it, 'A pause makes one smarter!' If that monster-spirit could not sleep tonight and brought harm to Master, what would we do then? I think it's better for us to try to rescue Master now, and catch them off their guard. Further delay may prove to be a mistake."

When he heard that, 8 Rules became more spirited. "Brother Sand's quite right!" he said. "We'd take advantage of this moonlight to go subdue the demons."

Pilgrim agreed and gave this instruction to the temple priests: "Guard our luggage and our horse. Wait till we capture the monster-spirits and bring them back here. We'll prove to the magistrate of this prefecture that they're specious Gods. The levy of oil can then be eliminated to bring relief to all the common folk of the region. Won't that be nice?" The priests obeyed. The 3 pilgrims at once mounted their auspicious clouds to leave the city. Truly shiftless and slothful, Chan nature's confused; fated for dangers, the mind of Dao's obscured.

### 108 3 priests fight fiercely at Green Dragon Mountain; 4 Stars help to capture rhinoceros fiends

The Great Sage Sun trod the wind and mounted the clouds with his 2 brothers and headed toward the northeast. Soon they arrived at the entrance to the Mysterious Flower Cave in the Green Dragon Mountain. As soon as they had dropped down from the clouds, 8 Rules wanted to tear down the doors with his rake. "Wait a moment!" said Pilgrim. "Let me go in and find out whether Master is dead or alive. Then we can do battle with them."

"These doors are tightly shut," said Sand-monk. "How can you get in?"

"With my magic power, of course," replied Pilgrim.

Dear Great Sage! Putting away his rod, he made the magic sign with his fingers and recited a spell, crying, "Change!"

At once he changed into a little firefly, truly quick and agile. Look at him! Wings stretched he soars like a comet. Grasses decayed become fireflies. 'One should not take lightly such magic change: his is a nature that endures. Flying near the stone door to look through the draft-like crack on one side with one leap he reaches the quiet yard to spy on the demons' conduct. '2He flew inside and immediately found several buffalo sprawling all over the place. Snoring thunderously, they were all fast asleep. Even when he reached the centre hall, he did not come across any activity. The doors on all sides were closed, and he had no idea where the three monster-spirits were sleeping. Passing through the hall, he headed for the rear, his tail glowing, and he heard the sound of weeping. There he discovered the Tang Monk who had been chained to a pillar in a back room. As Pilgrim flew quietly up to him, he heard his master sob out: "Since leaving Chang'an over a decade ago, mountains and streams I've passed in bitter woe. Happy to find one gala in the West, to reach at Gold-Level the Lantern-fest, I can't discern the lamps' false God-forms, for tribulations are my poor life's norms. If my good pupils come in strong pursuit, let their heroic powers soon bear fruit!"

On hearing this, Pilgrim was filled with delight and at once spread his wings to fly in front of his master. “Ah!” said the Tang Monk, wiping away his tears. “The West’s truly different! This is only the first month, a time when most insects are just beginning to stir. How can there be fireflies already?”

Unable to contain himself, Pilgrim called out, “Master, I’m here!”

“Wukong,” said the Tang Monk, delighted, “I was just saying, how can there be fireflies in the first month? So, it’s you!”

“O Master!” said Pilgrim as he changed back to his original form. “Because you’d not distinguish the true from the specious, you’ve caused such delay in your journey and wasted so much effort. I shouted at you repeatedly, trying to tell you that these were not good people but you’re already giving salutes. Those fiends were allowed to dim the lamps, steal the specially blended fragrant oil, and even kidnap you. I instructed 8 Rules and Sand-monk to remain in the monastery to guard our belongings. I myself followed the scent of the wind here. I didn’t know, of course, the name of this region but luckily the Sentinels came to report that this was the Mysterious Flower Cave of the Green Dragon Mountain. Yesterday I fought with those fiends until nightfall and then went back to tell my younger brothers what had happened. We didn’t sleep but we all came here instead. Fearing that it’s not easy to do battle deep in the night, and not knowing either how Master is faring, I used transformation to get in here to do a bit of detection.”

Highly pleased, the Tang Monk said, “So, 8 Rules and Sand-monk are outside?”

“Yes, they are,” replied Pilgrim. “Just now old monkey saw that all the monster-spirits had fallen asleep. Let me open the lock, bash down the door, and lead you out.” The Tang Monk nodded his head to thank him.

Using his lock-opening magic, Pilgrim brushed the instrument with his hand, and the lock snapped open at once by itself. As he led his master out, he suddenly heard one of the monster-kings calling out from one of the chambers by the side of the main hall, “Little ones, shut the doors tightly, and be careful with the candles and torches. How is it that there is no patrol or watch announcement? Why aren’t the rattles sounded?”

That bunch of little fiends had been fighting strenuously all day and had therefore all fallen asleep. They were awakened only by these words of the old monster. When the rattle sounded, some of them picked up their weapons, struck up a gong, and headed for the rear. They ran smack into both master and disciple.

“My good monk!” shouted the little monsters in unison. “You may have twisted open the lock but where do you think you’re going?”

Without permitting further explanation, Pilgrim whipped out his rod that with one sweep, attained the thickness of a rice bowl. He struck, and immediately slew two of them with one blow. The rest of the little monsters abandoned their weapons and dashed back to the centre hall. Hammering on the door of the bedroom, they shouted: “Great Kings! It’s bad! It’s bad! The hairy-faced monk has killed right in our house!”

Scrambling to their feet when they heard this, the three fiends cried, “Seize him! Seize him!” So terrified was the Tang Monk that his arms and legs turned numb.

Unable to care for his master any longer, Pilgrim wielded his rod and charged ahead. Those little monsters were in no way able to block him or stop him; he struck down a few here, pushed over several there, and escaped after smashing through several doors. “Brothers where are you?” he cried as he emerged.

With upraised rake and staff, 8 Rules and Sand-monk were waiting. “Elder Brother,” they said, “how are things?” Thereupon Pilgrim gave a thorough account of what had taken place after he had entered the cave through transformation – how he had freed his master and begun to slip out when the monsters discovered them, and how he had to leave his master behind and fight his way out. We’ll leave them for the moment.

The monster-kings, having captured again the Tang Monk, had him chained as before. Gripping their cutlass and axe with torches ablaze, they asked, “How did you open the lock? How did that monkey get in here? Confess at once, and we’ll spare your life! If you don’t, we’ll carve you in two!”

Trembling all over, the Tang Monk fell on his knees and said, “Dad Great Kings, my disciple Sun Wukong knows seventy-two ways of transformation. Just now he changed into a little firefly and flew in here to try to rescue me. We didn’t expect to wake up the Great Kings or to run into the little Great Kings. Not knowing any better, my disciple wounded two of them. When they all shouted with upraised weapons and lighted torches, he abandoned me and ran out.”

Laughing uproariously, the three monster-kings said, “It’s a good thing we woke up! We’ve not let *you* escape!” They ordered their little ones to shut the doors tightly front and back, and they were to do this in complete silence.

“If they shut the doors tightly without making a noise,” said Sand-monk, “they might secretly be plotting against our master. We’d get moving!”

“You’re right,” said Pilgrim. “Let’s knock down the door quickly!” Idiot at once sought to display his magic powers. Raising his rake, he delivered a blow with all his strength and smashed the stone doors to pieces. “You oil-stealing fiends!” he cried in a loud voice. “Send out my master instantly!”

Those little monsters were so terrified that they rolled back inside to report, “Great Kings, it’s bad! It’s bad! Our front doors have been smashed by those priests.”

Greatly annoyed, those 3 monster-kings said, “These fellows are impudent indeed!”

They immediately sent for their armour and, grasping their weapons, led the little monsters out the door to battle. It was then about the hour of the third watch, and a radiant moon in the sky made it almost bright as day. Once outside, they wielded their weapons without exchanging one word. On this side, Pilgrim went for the battle-axe, 8 Rules opposed the huge cutlass, and Sand-monk met the large cane. This was a magnificent battle! *3 Religious priests with rod, staff, and rake, and 3 monstrous demons with added spunk. From battle-axe, cutlass, and knotty cane 1 hears only the sound of wind and dust. The first few rounds stir up such grievous fog; coloured mists soar and scatter thereafter. Around the body the rake’s movements churn; still more praise-worthy’s the brave iron rod. A world’s rarity is the treasure staff to which the fiends are too stubborn to yield. The blade of the axe is both bright and sharp; the cane is knotty and covered with dots. The cutlass shimmers like a single-leaf door, opposed no less by priestly magic might. On this side they strike fiercely for their master’s life; on that side they claw at faces to keep the Tang Monk. The axe and the rod both strive hard to win; the rake and the cutlass both clash and meet. The knotty cane and the fiend-routing staff go back and forth to display their power.* 3 priests and 3 fiends fought for a long time and neither side proved to be the stronger. Then that Great King Cold-Deterrent shouted, “Little ones, come up here!” The various spirits rushed up with their weapons, and almost immediately 8 Rules tripped and fell to the ground. Tugging and pulling, several water-buffalo spirits hauled him inside the cave and tied him up. When Sand-monk saw that they had lost 8 Rules to a bellowing herd of bulls, he struck weakly at the Great King Dust-Deterrent and then turned to flee. He was however, thrown face first to the ground by the spirits swarming over him. Struggling in vain to get up, he too was taken captive and tied up. Pilgrim knew then that it would be difficult for him to continue fighting by himself; mounting the cloud somersault, he managed to escape.

At the sight of 8 Rules and Sand-monk who were brought before him, the eyes of the Tang Monk brimmed with tears. “What a pity,” he said, “that you two have also fallen into the clutches of these vicious hands! Where’s Wukong?”

“When Elder Brother saw that we’re captured,” replied Sand-monk, “he fled.”

“If he escaped,” said the Tang Monk, “he most certainly went somewhere to seek help. But I wonder when we might go free.”

Master and disciples were overcome by sadness. Pilgrim mounted his cloud somersault to return to the Mercy Cloud Temple. As the priests there met him, they asked, “Have you rescued Dad Tang?”

“It’s hard to do that!” said Pilgrim. “Very hard indeed! Those monster-spirits had vast magic powers. We three brothers fought those three for a long time. Then they summoned the little monsters to capture 8 Rules first and seize Sand-monk afterward. Old monkey’s lucky enough to escape.”

Greatly frightened, the priests said, “If someone like you, Holy Dad who could mount the clouds and ride the fog, still could not arrest them, the old master will certainly be harmed.”

“Not necessarily!” replied Pilgrim. “My master himself enjoys the secret protection of the Guardians of Monastery, the Guardians of Five Quarters, and the Six Gods of Darkness and Light. Then, too, he once tasted the Grass of the Reverted Cinnabar.<sup>3</sup> I doubt that his life will be harmed. It’s just that the monster-spirits are quite able that makes it necessary for old monkey to seek help in Heaven. You all must take good care to guard the horse and the luggage.”

Even more intimidated, the priests said, “Can Holy Dad go up to Heaven?”

With a chuckle, Pilgrim said, “The Celestial Palace used to be my homestead, in those years when I was the Great Sage Equal to Heaven. Because I disrupted the Festival of Mortal Peaches, I was subjugated by our God. I’d no choice but to escort the Tang Monk in his quest for scriptures, using my merit to atone for my sins. Throughout the journey, I’ve been assisting the right by dispelling the deviates. It is my master’s lot however, that he should suffer this ordeal, something none of you know anything about.” These words moved the priests to respect and worship. Stepping out, Pilgrim gave a loud whistle and at once vanished.

Marvellous Great Sage! He soon arrived at the West Heaven Gate where he ran into the Gold Star Venus conversing with the Deity-King Virūḍhaka and the Four Spirit Officers Yin, Bullseye, Tao, and Xu. When they saw Pilgrim arrive, they hurriedly saluted him and asked, “Where’s the Great Sage going?”

“As the guardian of the Tang Monk,” replied Pilgrim, “I’ve reached the Compassionate Heaven District of the Gold-Level Prefecture that is located on the eastern border of the Kingdom of India. My master was asked by the priests of the Mercy Cloud Temple to stay and enjoy the Lantern Festival. When we went to see the Golden-Lamp Bridge, we saw three golden lamps, in fact that used as fuel a specially blended fragrant oil. Though that oil has the worth of some fifty thousand taels of white gold, it is nonetheless presented for the enjoyment of some Gods who make an auspicious descent every year. As we’re looking at those lamps, three images of God indeed appeared. Not knowing good or ill, my master immediately rushed up to the top of the bridge to make his salute while I was trying to tell him they were no good. But they had already dimmed the lamps and abducted both the oil and my master in a gust of wind. I set off in pursuit of the wind and by dawn came upon a mountain. The Four Sentinels reported to me that it was the Green Dragon Mountain. The Mysterious Flower Cave of that mountain had three fiends with the names of Great King Cold-Deterrent, Great King Heat-Deterrent, and Great King Dust-Deterrent. Old monkey quickly demanded my master’s return at their door, fought with the monster-spirits but did not gain the upper hand. Then I used transformation to gain entrance. When I saw that my master was chained but unharmed, I freed him and tried to lead him out. But we’re detected, and I’d to flee. Thereafter, 8 Rules and Sand-monk joined me to wage a bitter battle with them that ended with the capture of my two brothers. For this reason, old monkey has come to request the Jade Emperor’s assistance in locating their origin and in bringing them to submission.”

“If the Great Sage had already fought with them,” said the Gold Star, chuckling sardonically, “couldn’t he tell where they came from?”

“Of course! Of course!” replied Pilgrim. “I’d tell they were a herd of bovine spirits. But because of their great magic powers, they are difficult to subdue quickly.”

The Gold Star said, “Those are indeed three rhinoceros spirits. Because their bodily designs bear the patterns of Heaven, long years of cultivation have wrought mortality for them, so that they too, are able to soar on the clouds and tread on the fog. Those fiends also have a penrecite for cleanliness. Invariably offended by their own reflection, they would want to leap into water to take a bath. They have various names, too: like female rhinoceros,<sup>4</sup> male rhinoceros, bull rhinoceros, striped rhinoceros, barbarian-hat rhinoceros,<sup>5</sup> *duoluo* rhinoceros,<sup>6</sup> and Heaven-reaching patterned rhinoceros. They are all endowed with a single aperture, triple hair, and two horns. When they move through rivers and seas, they are able to open a path in the water. As for your Cold-Deterrent, Heat-Deterrent, and Dust-Deterrent, they are a noption because of certain precious vital forces stored in their horns. That’s why they have given themselves such titles as Great King so-and-so. If you want to catch them, you must seek help from the Four Wood-Creature Stars. Their mere presence will bring these beasts to submission.”

Saluting hurriedly, Pilgrim asked, “And who are the Four Wood-Creature Stars? I beg Longevity to tell me plainly.”

“These stars,” replied the Gold Star with a smile, “are stationed at that part of the universe just outside the Dipper Palace. When you’ve memorialised to the Jade Emperor, you’ll learn the truth.” After folding his hands in front of him to indicate his gratitude, Pilgrim went inside the Heaven Gate. In a moment, he reached the lower level of the Hall of Perfect Light where he met first with Ge, Qiu, Zhang, and Xu, the Four Celestial Masters. “Where are you heading?” they asked.

“Recently we arrived at Gold-Level Prefecture,” replied Pilgrim. “Because my master has loosened slightly his hold on the nature of Zen, he was abducted by monstrous demons while watching the lights during the Lantern Festival. Old monkey cannot bring them to submission, and I’ve come especially to make this known to the Jade Emperor and request assistance.”

The Four Celestial Masters led Pilgrim immediately into the Hall of Divine Mists to present his memorial. After the exchange of greetings and a complete rehearsal of what took place, the Jade Emperor was about to issue a decree to call up some celestial warriors. Pilgrim went forward and said, “Just now when old monkey arrived at the West Heaven Gate, Star Longevity told me that those fiends were rhinoceroses who had become spirits. Only the Four Wood-Creature Stars are able to bring them to submission.” The Jade Emperor at once ordered Celestial Master Xu to go to the Dipper Palace and summon the Four Wood-Creature Stars to descend with Pilgrim to the Region Below.

When they arrived outside the palace, the Twenty-Eight Constellations were there to meet them. “By the sage decree,” said the Heaven Preceptor, “I’m to command the Four Wood-Creature Stars to descend to the Region Below with the Great Sage Sun in order to subdue certain monsters.” Immediately Horn the Wood Dragon, Dipper the Wood Unicorn, Straddler the Wood Wolf, and Well the Wood Hound stepped forward to answer the call. “Great Sage Sun,” they said, “where do you want us to go to subdue monsters?”

“So, it’s you four!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “That old Longevity is so cryptic that I can’t understand him! If he had told me that I’d see the Four Woods of the Twenty-Eight Constellations, I’d have come directly to issue the invitation. There would have been no need for any imperial decree.”

“How can you say that, Great Sage?” said the Four Woods. “Without the decree that one of us dares leave his station? Where is this place you want us to go to? Let’s get there quickly.”

“It’s a spot northeast of the Gold-Level Prefecture,” replied Pilgrim, “at the Mysterious Flower Cave in the Green Dragon Mountain. We’ve some rhinoceroses there who have become spirits.”

"If rhinoceroses have become spirits," said Dipper the Wood Unicorn, Straddler the Wood Wolf, and Horn the Wood Dragon together, "you don't need all of us. Just ask Constellation Well to go with you. He can climb mountains to devour tigers, and go down to the seas to catch rhinoceroses."

"These are no moon-gazing rhinoceroses!" said Pilgrim. "They are ones who have attained the Way through prolonged cultivation, all enjoying the age of a millennium. We've to have the four of you, and please do not refuse. If only one of you went along with me, you might be unable to catch them. Wouldn't that be a waste of our efforts again?"

"Look at the way you people talk!" said the Celestial Master. "The decree orders all four of you to go. How could you not go? Let's start flying at once, so I can go back to make my report." Thereupon the Celestial Master took leave of Pilgrim and left.

"There's no need for you to wait any longer," said the Four Woods. "You go provoke battle first and entice them to come out. We'll then attack." Rushing forward, Pilgrim shouted, "You oil-stealing fiends! Return my master!" The doors had been smashed by 8 Rules but now they had been boarded up with planks by the little monsters. When they heard Pilgrim reviling them outside, they dashed in to report, "Great Kings, the monk Sun is reviling us outside!"

"He has already fled in defeat," said Dust-Deterrent. "Why is he returning a day later? Could it be that he has found some help somewhere?"

"Who's afraid of any help he might get?" asked Cold-Deterrent. "Bring our armour quickly. Little ones, make sure that you surround him this time and don't let him get away."

Not knowing any better, that herd of spirits all walked out of the cave, all holding spears and knives, waving banners, and rolling drums. "Aren't you afraid of a beating, ape? You dare show up again?" they snapped at him.

Now the word "ape" was most irksome to Pilgrim. Clenching his teeth in fury, he raised the iron rod to strike. The three monster-kings ordered the little monsters to fan out and had Pilgrim entirely surrounded. On this side however, the Four Wood-Creature Stars all brandished their weapons and shouted, "Cursed beasts, don't you dare move!"

When those three monster-kings saw the Four Stars, they naturally became frightened. "It's bad! It's bad!" they all cried. "He has found our conquerors! Little ones, run for your lives!" With loud snorts and bellows, all the little monsters changed back into their original forms: they were all mountain-buffalo spirits, water-buffalo spirits, and yellow-buffalo spirits, madly stampeding all over the mountain. The three monster-kings, too, revealed their true forms. When they lowered their two hands, they had four legs once more. Their hooves thundering like iron cannons, they fled toward the northeast, closely pursued by the Great Sage leading Well the Wood Hound and Horn the Wood Dragon. Dipper the Wood Unicorn and Straddler the Wood Wolf however, remained on the eastern slope where they succeeded in either beating to death or capturing live all the rest of the buffalo spirits stranded on the summit, in the stream, or in the valley. Then they proceeded to the Mysterious Flower Cave and freed the Tang Monk, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk.

Recognising the two Stars, Sand-monk saluted with his companions to thank them. "How did the two of you manage to come and rescue us?" he asked.

"We're ordered here by the Jade Emperor's decree to bring those fiends to submission and rescue you," replied the two Stars, "after the Great Sage Sun presented a memorial."

"Why, then," asked the Tang Monk, shedding tears again, "didn't my disciple Wukong come here?"

"Those three old fiends happen to be three rhinoceroses," said the Star. "When they saw us, they fled for their lives toward the northeast. The Great Sage Sun led Well the Wood Hound and Horn the Wood Dragon to give chase. Having mopped up the herd of buffalo, we two came here especially to free the sage monk." The Tang Monk again touched his forehead to thank them. Then he saluted himself once more to thank Heaven.

Raising him, 8 Rules said, "Master, excessive ceremony becomes insincerity. There's no need for you to keep on saluting. The Four Star Officers have done this partly because of the imperial decree of the Jade Emperor, and partly because of their regard for Elder Brother. We may have done away with the various fiends but we've yet to find out whether those old monsters have been brought to submission. Let us take out some of the valuables in this place and then tear down the cave so that they will be permanently uprooted. Afterward we'd return to the temple to wait for Elder Brother."

"Marshal Heaven Reeds is quite right," said Straddler the Wood Wolf. "You and the Curtain-Raising General should protect your master and return to rest in the temple. Let's go to the northeast to fight."

"Exactly! Exactly!" said 8 Rules. "You two must join them in pursuit. You must exterminate all of the monsters before you go back to report to the throne."

The 2 star officers at once left in pursuit. Ransacking the cave, 8 Rules and Sand-monk took out a pile of valuables – all coral, cornelian, pearls, amber, ornamental gems, precious stones, fine jade, and gold. They asked their master to sit on the mountain ledge before starting a fire that had the entire cave reduced to ashes. Only then did they help the Tang Monk find their way back to the Mercy Cloud Temple. Truly *"Good's limit begets evil,"* the classics say.

*Fair fortune ends in mishap? Well it may!*

*Chan nature's confused for love of floral lights; pretty scenes have led the mind of Dao astray. The great elixir you must always guard; 1 slip and you're rewarded with dismay. Never slacken your firm and tight control. A little indolence brings on disarray.* Those 3 returned to the temple with their lives. Dipper the Wood Unicorn and Straddler the Wood Wolf, those 2-star officers mounted the clouds and pursued the fiends toward the northeast. They looked this way and that in mid-air but could see no one. Then they looked toward the great Western Ocean and caught sight of the Great Sage Sun in the distance, hollering above the water. Lowering the direction of their clouds, the two of them said, "Great Sage where've the fiends gone?"

"Why didn't the two of you join us in pursuit?" asked Pilgrim angrily. "Why do you wait till now to ask your addle-headed questions?"

"When I saw that the Great Sage with Well and Horn had defeated the fiendish demons," said Dipper the Wood Unicorn, "I thought that you'd surely capture them. We therefore made a clean sweep of the other monster-spirits and then entered the Mysterious Flower Cave to rescue your master and brothers. We ransacked the mountain, burned down the cave, and entrusted your master to the care of your two brothers who're going to bring him back to the Mercy Cloud Temple in the city. When we saw however, that you didn't return after all this while, we found our way here."

Moved to delight and gratitude by these words, Pilgrim said, "In that case, you've achieved merit. Thanks for all your trouble! Thanks for all your trouble! Those three monstrous demons however, crawled into the ocean after we chased them here. Well and Horn went after them but they told old monkey to remain by the shore to stand guard. Since the two of you've arrived, you can head them off here. Let old monkey go in too." *Dear Great Sage!* Gripping his iron rod and making the magic sign with his fingers, he opened up a pathway in the water and went into the depths of the ocean.

There he found those 3 monstrous demons waging the bitterest battle with Well the Wood Hound and Horn the Wood Dragon. Leaping near, he shouted, "Old monkey's here!"

Those monster-spirits were already hard pressed when they had to confront the 2 star officers. When they heard Pilgrim's cry, they turned immediately and fled for their lives toward the centre of the ocean. The horns on the fiends' heads were excellent instruments for dividing the water. All you'd hear were a loud splatter as they knifed through the billows with the Great Sage Sun and the 2 star officers hard on their heels. In the Western Ocean, there were a Nature spirit and a seaman out on patrol. When they saw from a distance the rhinoceroses opening up the water and moreover when they caught sight of the Great Sage Sun and the 2 celestial constellations whom they recognised, they hurried to the Water Crystal Palace to report to the dragon king. "Great King," they said somewhat apprehensively, "there're three rhinoceroses being chased by the Great Sage Equal to Heaven and two celestial constellations!"

On hearing this, the old dragon king, Aoshun, summoned Prince Moang and said to him, "Call up the aquatic soldiers at once! It must be that Cold-Deterrent, Heat-Deterrent, and Dust-Deterrent, those three rhinoceros spirits have offended Pilgrim Sun. Since they've now arrived in our ocean, we'd give Sun some armed assistance."

This order immediately made Ao Moang call up the troops. In an instant, tortoises, sea-turtles, sea-dragons, breams, carps, shrimp soldiers, crab privates all gave their battle cries, and rushed out of the Water Crystal Palace, each wielding spear or sword to block the path of the rhinoceros spirits. Unable to advance, the spirits retreated hurriedly only to find the Great Sage closing in with Well and Horn, the 2 stars. They became so flustered that they were no longer able to stay together as a herd. Scattering in three directions, each tried to flee for his life. Soon Dust-Deterrent was surrounded by the old dragon king and his troops. Delighted by what he saw, the Great Sage Sun cried, "Hold it! Hold it! We want him alive! We don't want to catch a carcass!"

Hearing this, Moang led his troops to rush forward and pull Dust-Deterrent down. An iron hook was thrust through his nose and then he was bull-tied. Then the old dragon king gave the command for his troops to track down the other 2 spirits and lend assistance to the star officers for their capture. When the young prince led his troops forward, they saw Well the Wood Hound had changed into his original form. He had Cold-Deterrent pinned down and was in fact devouring him with great bites. "Constellation Well! Constellation Well!" cried Moang. "Don't bite him! The Great Sage Sun wants him alive, not dead!"

He shouted several times but the monster's neck had already been bitten through. Moang ordered the shrimp soldiers and crab privates to haul the dead rhinoceros back to the Water Crystal Palace while he and other soldiers set off in pursuit again with Well the Wood Hound. They ran right into Horn the Wood Dragon who was chasing Heat-Deterrent back toward them. Ordering the tortoises and turtles to fan out, Moang led his troops to encircle the spirit completely. "Spare my life! Spare my life!" the fiend could only say. Well the Wood Hound walked forward and grabbed one of his ears. Taking away his cutlass, the star officer said, "We're not going to kill you. We'll turn you over to the Great Sage Sun for his disposal."

They all lowered their weapons and went back to the Water Crystal Palace crying, "We've caught them all!"

Pilgrim saw that one of the spirits had been beheaded: still dripping blood, the corpse lay on the ground. Another was pushed to his knees, his ear still grasped by Well the Wood Hound. As he walked forward to look more carefully, Pilgrim said, "It wasn't a blade that cut this head off!"

"If I'd not yelled out," said Moang, chuckling, "Star Officer Well would've devoured the body as well!"

"It's all right," said Pilgrim. "Let's saw off his two horns and skin him. We'll take those things along but the meat will be left here for the enjoyment of the worthy dragon king and his prince."

A rope was threaded through the iron hook in the nose of Dust-Deterrent, so that Horn the Wood Dragon could lead him. The same treatment was given Heat-Deterrent, and Well the Wood Hound held onto the rope. "Let's bring them up to see the chief of the Gold-Level Prefecture so that he can make a thorough investigation of how they've impersonated God to hurt the people all these years. Then we'll decide what to do with them."

All of them agreed. They took leave of the dragon king and his prince and left the Western Ocean, leading the 2 rhinoceroses. After rejoining Straddler and Dipper, the 2 stars, they mounted the cloud and fog to return to the Gold-Level Prefecture. Treading the auspicious luminosity, Pilgrim cried aloud in mid-air: "Chief of the Gold-Level Prefecture, subordinate officials, and all you people of this region, hear me! We're sage monks sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East to seek scriptures in the Western Heaven. The creatures who pretended to be various Gods making their auspicious descent and who demanded sacrifices of the golden lamps each year from the households of this district and prefecture are actually these rhinoceros fiends. When we passed through here and went to look at the lamps on the night of the fifteenth, these fiends abducted both my master and the lamp oil. I therefore asked the gods of Heaven to bring them to submission. We've now cleaned up their mountain cave and all the monstrous demons have been exterminated. From now on your district and prefecture should make no sacrifice of the golden lamps, for it only taxes the people and drains their wealth."

Inside the Mercy Cloud Temple, 8 Rules and Sand-monk had just escorted the Tang Monk through the gate. When they heard Pilgrim speaking up in mid-air, they abandoned their master and their luggage to mount the wind and cloud and rise to the sky. When they questioned him, Pilgrim said, "One has been bitten to death by Constellation Well but we've taken along its skin and the sawed-off horns. The two captured alive are here."

"We might as well push these two down to the city for the officials and the people to see," said 8 Rules, "so that they'll know that we're sages and deities. Moreover, we must trouble the four star officers to lower their clouds to the ground and go with us to the prefectural hall for the disposal of these fiends. The truth and their guilt have been firmly established. There's nothing more we'd discuss!"

"Of late," said one of the four stars, "Marshal Heaven Reeds seems to be quite knowledgeable about principles and shows good understanding of the law. That's marvellous!"

"Being a priest for some years has taught me a few things!" replied 8 Rules.

So the various deities pushed the rhinoceroses toward the earth. When they all descended to the prefectural residence on a bouquet of coloured clouds, the officials of this district and prefecture along with the populace in and out of the city were so terrified that each household set up incense tables and saluted to receive the gods from Heaven. In a little while, the priests of the Mercy Cloud Temple could be seen entering the prefectural residence also, carrying the elder in a palanquin. When he met Pilgrim, he thanked him profusely.

"I was beholden to the noble Constellation officers," said the Tang Monk, "for having us rescued. But not having seen my worthy disciple has caused me unending concern. Now I truly rejoice in your return in triumph. I'd like to know however where you chased these fiends before they were captured."

"Since I took leave of my honoured master day before yesterday," replied Pilgrim, "old monkey ascended to Heaven to make his investigation. The Gold Star Venus was kind enough to reveal to me that these monstrous demons were actually rhinoceroses, and that I'd solicit the help of the Four Wood Creature Stars. Immediately I memorialised to the Jade Emperor who gave his permission and his decree for the stars to descend to the cave. We fought there and they fled. Dipper and Straddler, the two Constellations, kindly rescued you while old monkey joined Well and Horn, the two other Constellations, to pursue the monsters. When we reached the Great Western Ocean, we're also indebted to the assistance of the dragon king who sent his son to help us with his troops. That's why we're able to capture them and bring them back for trial." The elder could not stop his thanksgiving and commendation. They also saw the magistrate of the district and his various subordinate officials who were all burning tall precious candles and filling their braziers with incense as they saluted to the sky.

After a little while, 8 Rules became so aroused that he whipped out the ritual razor. With one stroke he cut off the head of Dust-Deterrent and with another, the head of Heat-Deterrent. Then he took up a saw to saw off their four horns. The Great Sage Sun was even more resolute. He at once gave this order: "Let the four star officers take these four rhinoceros horns up to the Region Above and present them as tribute to the Jade Emperor when you hand back the imperial decree. As for the two horns we brought along, we'll deposit one at the prefectural hall, so that it may be used as a

perpetual witness to posterity that the lamp-oil levy has been eliminated. We ourselves will take along one horn to present to the Religious Patriarch at the Spirit Mountain.” The four stars were enormously pleased. Saluting immediately to take leave of the Great Sage, they mounted the coloured clouds to go back.

The chief official however, would not permit the master and his three disciples to leave. He ordered a huge vegetarian banquet, and asked various village officials to bear the visitors company. Meanwhile, he issued a public proclamation informing the civil and military population that no golden lamps are permitted for the following year, and that the necessity for oil purchases levied on the big households was forever removed. The butchers, too, were told to slaughter the two rhinoceroses; their hides were to be treated and dried so that they could be used to make armour while their meat was distributed to both officials and the common people. In addition, he appropriated some of the funds already collected for oil purchases to buy land from the people. A temple commemorating the four stars subjugating the monsters was to be erected, along with living shrines to the Tang Monk and his three disciples. Placards with proper inscriptions were set up, so that their good deeds could forever be transmitted and gratefully acknowledged.

Since they could not leave at once, master and disciples made up their mind to enjoy themselves. Each of those two hundred and forty lamp-oil households took turns to entertain them; after a banquet was given by one family, another would be offered by a different household without pause. 8 Rules was determined to have complete satisfaction. Stuffing up his sleeve a few of those treasures that he had looted from the monsters' cave, he used them as tips for each of the vegetarian banquets. They lived there thus for over a month, and still they could not set out on their journey. Finally, the elder gave this instruction: "Wukong, take the rest of the precious jewels and give them all to the priests of the Mercy Cloud Temple as a token of our thanks. Let's not tell those big households but let's slip away tomorrow before dawn. If we indulge in pleasure like this, our enterprise of scripture-seeking will be delayed, and I fear that we'll offend the Religious Patriarch and bring on further calamities. That will be most inconvenient." Pilgrim carried out his master's instructions one by one.

By the hour of the fifth watch next morning he was already up, and at once asked 8 Rules to prepare the horse. Having enjoyed his food and drink in great comfort, Idiot slept so soundly that he was still half-dazed when he said, "Why prepare the horse so early in the morning?"

"Master tells us to get moving!" snapped Pilgrim.

Rubbing his face, Idiot said, "That elder should behave himself! All two hundred and forty of those big households have sent us invitations but we've managed to enjoy a full meal barely thirty times. Why does he want to make Old bull endure hunger so soon?" On hearing this, the elder scolded him, saying, "Overstuffed coolie! Stop babbling! Get up quickly! If you keep up this ruckus, I'll ask Wukong to knock out your teeth with his golden-hooped rod!"

When Idiot heard that, he became completely flustered. "This time Master has changed!" he cried. "Usually he cares for me, loves me, and, knowing that I'm stupid, protects me. Whenever Elder Brother wants to hit me, he pleads for me. Why should he turn so vicious today as to want to beat me?"

"Because Master's offended by your gluttony," said Pilgrim, "which has delayed our journey. Hurry up! Pack the luggage and get the horse ready. You'll be spared a beating!" As Idiot was truly fearful of being beaten, he leaped up and put on his clothes. Then he shouted at Sand-monk: "Get up quickly! A beating's on its way!"

Sand-monk, too leaped up and each of them finished his preparation. Waving his hand, the elder said, "Quiet! Let's not disturb the temple priests." He mounted the horse hurriedly. After opening the gate, they found their way and left. As they went forth this time, it was truly like *opening the jade cage to let the phoenix out or breaking the gold lock to set the dragon free.*

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At Jetavana Park he asks the aged about the cause; at the Kingdom of India he sees the king and meets his mate

Memory has to start with love; leniency will beget mishap.  
Why does discernment sort out 3 estrades?¹ Merit done you'll end in primal sea.  
Whether you'll be a god or God, you must prepare yourself within: be clean, pure, and wholly removed from dust.  
Fruit borne you fly to Realm Above.²

The priests in the temple discovered by dawn that Tripitaka and his disciples had vanished. “We didn’t detain them,” they all said, “we didn’t take leave of them and we didn’t beg them! And that’s how we allowed a living Nun to walk clean away!”

As they were saying this, a few members of the wealthy households in the south suburb arrived to deliver their invitations. Clapping their hands, the various priests said, “We’re caught off-guard last evening, and they all mounted the clouds and left in the night.”

The people all saluted to the sky to express their gratitude. Because of what the monks had said however, the entire population of the city – officials and commons – all learned of it. They at once requested the wealthy households to purchase the five beasts, flowers, and fruits to sacrifice at the living shrine as an expression of their gratitude. The Tang Monk and his disciples fed on the wind and slept by the waters as they journeyed peacefully for over half a month. One day they found themselves again before a tall mountain. Growing apprehensive, the Tang Monk said, “Disciples with that tall rugged mountain before us, we must be careful!”

Laughing, Pilgrim said, “This road taking us near the land of God surely does not harbour any monster or deviate. Master, you’d relax and not worry.”

“Disciple,” said the Tang Monk, “it may be true that the land of God is not far away. But remember what the temple priests told us the other day: the distance to the capital of the Kingdom of India is still some two thousand miles. I wonder how far we’ve gone already.”

“Master,” said Pilgrim, “could it be that you’ve quite forgotten again the *Heart Thread* of the Crow’s Nest Chan Master?”

Tripitaka said, “That *Prajñā-Paramita* is like a cassock or an alms bowl that accompanies my very body. Since it was taught me by that Crow’s Nest Chan Master, has there been a day that I didn’t recite it? Indeed, has there been a single hour that I didn’t have it in mind? I’d recite the piece backward! How could I’ve forgotten it?”

“Master, you may be able to recite it,” said Pilgrim, “but you’ve not begged that Chan Master for its proper interpretation.”

“Ape-head!” snapped Tripitaka. “How dare you say that I don’t know its interpretation! Do you?”

“Yes, I know its interpretation!” replied Pilgrim. After that exchange, neither Tripitaka nor Pilgrim uttered another word.

At their sides, 8 Rules nearly collapsed with giggles and Sand-monk almost broke up with amusement. “What brassiness!” said 8 Rules. “Like me, he began his career as a monster-spirit. He wasn’t an acolyte who had heard lectures on the *Threads*, nor was he a seminarian who had seen the law expounded. It’s sheer flimflam and pettifoggery to say that he knows how to interpret the *Thread*! Hey, why is he silent now? Let’s hear the lecture! Please give us the interpretation!”

“Second Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “do you believe him? Big Brother is giving us a nice tall tale, just to egg Master on his journey. He may know how to play with a rod. He doesn’t know anything about explaining a *Thread*!”

“Aware of Ability and Awakened to Purity,” said Tripitaka, “stop this claptrap! Wukong’s interpretation is made in a speechless language. That’s true interpretation.”

As master and disciples conversed like that, they managed to cover quite a distance and walk past several mountain ridges. Then they came upon a huge monastery by the side of the road. “Wukong, that’s a monastery ahead of us,” said Tripitaka. “Look at it. Though *not overly big or small, it’s the roof of glazed green tiles; half old and half new. It’s enclosed with red eight-word brick walls. ³Vaguely one can see the canopies of green pines, aged things of who knows how many centuries or millennia that’ve lived till now; and one can hear a stream’s soft murmur, a waterway dug out in some distant dynasty that has still remained. On the gates is inscribed in large letters:*

The Gold-Spreading Monastery

On a hanging plaque

The Ruins of Antiquity.”

Pilgrim replied that indeed he too saw that it was the Gold-Spreading Monastery, and 8 Rules said the same thing. “Gold-Spreading, Gold-Spreading,” mused Tripitaka as he rode, “could this be the territory of the Kingdom of Śrāvastī?”

“This is quite strange, master!” said 8 Rules. “I’ve followed you now for several years and never known you to recognise the way before. Today you seem to know where you’re.”

“It’s not quite like that,” replied Tripitaka. “It’s just that in studying the *Threads* I’ve frequently read this account that tells of a god’s experience in the Jetavana Park of the city, Śrāvastī. The park’s said to be something that the Elder Anāthapiṇḍika wanted to purchase from Prince Jeta so that it’d be used as the place for God to lecture on the *Threads*. The prince said however, ‘My park isn’t for sale. The only way you can buy it’s for you to cover the whole park with gold.’ When Elder Anāthapiṇḍika heard this, he took gold bricks and spread them throughout the park. Only then did he succeed in purchasing the Jetavana Park from the prince and inviting the World-Honoured one to expound the Law. When I saw the Gold-Spreading Monastery just now, I thought this could be the one described in the story.”⁴

“How fortunate!” said 8 Rules, chuckling, “If indeed it’s the one in the story, we’d go and dig up a few bricks to give to people.”

They all laughed at this for a while before Tripitaka dismounted. When they entered the monastery, they discovered sitting by the main gates a few cart-full of people – some luggage totters, some cart pushers, and some with bags on their backs. Some were sleeping and others were chatting when they caught sight of master and disciples. The handsome features of the elder along with the hideous ones of his disciples made the people somewhat fearful, and they all stepped aside for the pilgrims to pass through. Fearing that they might stir up trouble, Tripitaka kept calling out, “Gently! Gently!”

And all his disciples seemed to be behaving themselves. After passing through the Lightning Hall, they were met by a priest whose whole bearing seemed quite devout. Truly *his face like a full moon shone; body was the wisdom-tree. His windswept sleeves hugged his staff and sandals trod the pebbled path.* Tripitaka saluted the moment he caught sight of him, and the priest hurriedly returned his greeting, saying, “Master where do you come from?”

“This disciple’s Chen Xuanzang,” replied Tripitaka, “who’s been sent by the decree of the Great Tang emperor to go worship God in the Western Heaven and seek scriptures. Our journey takes us past your treasure monastery, and I’ve taken the liberty of visiting you to ask for one night’s lodging. We’ll leave tomorrow.”

“Our humble monastery’s,” said the priest, “inhabited frequently by visitors from all over the world for as long as they please. The elder’s moreover a divine monk from the Land of the East and it’ll be our very good fortune to serve you.”

Tripitaka thanked him and then asked his three companions to follow him. They went past the winding corridor and the donation boxes to reach the abbot’s quarters. After exchanging greetings with the abbot, they took their seats proper to hosts and guests. Pilgrim and his two brothers, too, sat down with hands lowered at their sides. When the monastery had heard the news of scripture priests sent by the Great Tang in the Land of the East, all the monks – whether they were old or young, long-term residents or temporary guests, elders or altar boys – came to present themselves. After tea had been offered, a vegetarian meal was served. Our elder presently was still reciting his grace but 8 Rules was impatient enough to send the buns, vegetarian foods, and vermicelli soups tumbling down his throat. The abbot’s quarters by now were filled with people; the more intelligent ones were admiring the features of Tripitaka but the sportier persons were all staring at the way 8 Rules ate. As Sand-monk was rather observant, he saw immediately what was happening and furtively gave 8 Rules a pinch saying, “Gently!”

8 Rules became so exasperated that he yelled, “Gently! Gently! But my stomach’s empty!”

Chuckling, Sand-monk said, “Second Elder Brother, you may not realise this. There are many so-called gentlemen in the world but when it concerns the stomach, they are no different from you and me.” These words quieted 8 Rules while Tripitaka said a short grace to end the meal. After the eating utensils had been removed, Tripitaka thanked his hosts.

One of the priests of the monastery inquired about the history of the Land of the East. When Tripitaka spoke of certain historical ruins, he in turn asked for the reason for the name of the Gold-Spreading Monastery. That priest replied, “This originally was the Monastery of the Anāthapiṇḍika Garden in the Kingdom of Śrāvastī. It also goes by the name of the Jetavana Park. Because the Elder Anāthapiṇḍika spread gold bricks on the ground to enable a god to expound the *Threads*, the name was changed again to the present one. About a generation ago, this whole region was the Kingdom of Śrāvastī, and Elder Anāthapiṇḍika was living here at the time. Our monastery originally was the elder’s Jetavana Park, and that is why the full name should be Benefactor-of-Orphans Gold-Spreading Monastery. Behind our monastery we still have the foundation of the Jetavana Park. In recent years, a great rainstorm would on occasion wash out some gold or silver or pearls. Those lucky enough would be able to pick them up.”

“So it’s not a false rumour but the truth!” said Tripitaka. Then he asked again, “When I entered your treasured monastery just now, I saw inside the twin corridors by the gate many merchants with their mules and horses, their luggage and carts. Why are they staying here?”

“Our mountain here is named the Hundred-Legs Mountain,” replied the priest. “In previous years it had been quite safe. Recently however, we don’t quite know what has taken place but it may be that the seasonal cycles have produced a few centipede spirits that have frequently injured people on the road. Though the wounds they inflict may not be lethal, they have certainly inhibited the travellers’ movement. Beneath our mountain is a pass by the name of Cock-Crow. People dare not walk through it until the cock has crowed. Because it’s getting late now, those merchants you saw don’t want to take an unnecessary risk. So they use our humble monastery for lodging, and they’ll leave after the cock has crowed.”



"We, too, will wait till the cock crows before we leave," said Tripitaka. As they chatted, more vegetarian food was brought in, so that the Tang Monk and his disciples dined again. Afterwards, Tripitaka and Pilgrim went out for a leisurely stroll to enjoy a bright moon in her first quarter. A workman approached them and said, "Our venerable dad teacher would like to meet the visitors from China." Turning quickly, Tripitaka saw an old monk, a bamboo staff in his hand who saluted him, saying, "Is this the master who has come from China?" "I dare not accept such honour," replied Tripitaka, returning his salutation, as the old monk began to compliment him effusively. "What is the old master's lofty age?" he asked. "I've passed my forty-fifth year in vain," said Tripitaka, "and may I ask what is the honourable age of the old abbot?" With a chuckle, the old monk said, "Rather fruitlessly I've exceeded the venerable master's age by a sexagenarian cycle." "You're a hundred and five years old now," said Pilgrim. "Can you tell how old I'm?" "Though the countenance of this master is aged," said the old priest, "your spirit is most clear. My eyes are quite dim in the moonlight, and it's hard for me to tell your age right away." After talking for a while, they went to look at the rear corridor. "Just now the old foundation of the Jetavana Park was mentioned," said Tripitaka. "Where exactly is it?" "Just beyond our rear gate," replied the old monk and asked that it be opened immediately. All they saw was a vacant lot with a few piles of rubble remaining as the foundation of the walls. Pressing his palms together, Tripitaka sighed and said, "*The good giver, Sudatta, I call to mind; with jewels and gold he relieved poor mankind. For all times Jetavana has its fame. With which Arhat can we the elder find?*" They all walked slowly, enjoying the sight of the moon. Having gone out of the rear gate, they reached a terrace where they sat for a while. Suddenly they heard the sound of weeping. Tripitaka listened attentively, and found that the person weeping was also making protest, something about her parents not comprehending her pain. So moved was he by the words that he himself began to shed tears also. "Who is this person grieving here?" he turned to ask the other monks. On hearing this question, the old monk ordered the other priests to go back first to make tea. After everyone had left, he at once saluted low to Tripitaka and Pilgrim. Raising him, Tripitaka said, "Old abbot, why are you doing this?" "Since this disciple has now exceeded a century of age," replied the old monk, "he is somewhat knowledgeable in human affairs. In the quiet hours of meditation, moreover, he has seen a few visions. And that is why this disciple can perceive that the venerable master and his disciple are quite different from other people. For only this young master here can bring to light this grievous matter." "Let's hear you tell us what the problem is," said Pilgrim. The old monk said, "Exactly on this day a year ago, your disciple was just in the midst of meditation on the dialectical relation between our nature and the moon<sup>5</sup> when a soft breeze brought to me the sounds of grief and protest. I descended from my couch to go to the foundation of the Jetavana Park to look around. There I found a pretty, comely girl. I asked her, 'What family do you belong to? Why are you here?' The girl replied, 'I'm the princess of the King of India. I was enjoying the sight of flowers beneath the moon when I was blown here by a strong gust.' Immediately I'd her locked up in an empty room that I sealed with bricks until it looked like a prison. There was only a small hole left in the door, through which one could pass a rice bowl. The next day I told this story to the other priests – that I'd imprisoned a monstrous deviate. Since we priests were men of mercy, I said, I'd not take its life, and I'd give the prisoner two meals of coarse rice and tea daily for sustenance. The girl was clever enough to understand my intentions. Fearing that she might be violated by the priests, she pretends to be mad, sleeping in her own piss and lying in her own shit. During the day she babbles all the time and puts on a dumb, stupid look. In the quiet of the night however, she weeps and yearns for her parents. Several times I myself have tried to enter the city to make inquiry about the princess but I've had no success whatever. For this reason I've kept her tightly locked up and dare not release her. Now that we've the good fortune of seeing the venerable master's arrival at our kingdom, I beg you enter the capital and exercise your vast religion power to shed light on this matter. Not only will you thus be able to rescue the virtuous but you'll also make manifest your divine potency." Pilgrim and Tripitaka firmly committed to their memory what they had heard. As they spoke however, two young priests came to invite them to tea before retiring, and so they all returned to the monastery.

In the abbot's quarters 8 Rules was grumbling to Sand-monk, saying, "We've to be on our way by dawn when the cock crows. And they still won't come to bed!"

"Idiot," said Pilgrim, "what are you mumbling?"

"Go to sleep!" said 8 Rules. "It's so late already. What's there to look at?"

Thereupon the old monk walked away and the Tang Monk retired. This is precisely the time when *the moon fades, the flowers dream, and all sounds cease. The window screens let in a soft, warm breeze. Thrice has the clepsydra dropped low in sight; the Milky Way glows like the brightest light.* They had not slept for very long that night when they heard the cock crow. In the front the travelling merchants all rose in a clamour as they lit their lamps and began to cook their rice. Our elder, too, woke up 8 Rules and Sand-monk so that they could saddle the horse and pack. When Pilgrim asked for lights, the priests of the monastery had already risen earlier to prepare tea and breakfast that they waited to serve in the rear. Delighted, 8 Rules ate an entire platter of buns. Thereafter he and Sand-monk brought out the horse and the luggage while Pilgrim and Tripitaka thanked their hosts. Again the old monk said to Pilgrim, "Don't forget that matter of the weeping girl!" "Indeed, I'll not!" laughed Pilgrim. "When I get to the city, I'll be able to establish the fundamental principles by listening to sounds and determine the emotions by scrutinising countenances."

Those travelling merchants, noisy and boisterous, also followed them to the main road. By about the hour of the Tiger they passed the Cock-Crow Pass but not until the hour of the Serpent<sup>6</sup> did they catch sight of the city rampart. The city itself was truly like an iron cistern or a citadel of metal, a divine islet and a Heavenly prefecture. It has the noble form of a *dragon coiled or a tiger sitting with colours from phoenix towers emitting. The royal moat flows like a circling band; mountains, flag-like, surround this blessed land. Banners at dawn light up the imperial way; pipes and drums of springtime by bridges play. The people prosper for the king is good: 5 grains in abundance they have for food.* As they moved along the street of the eastern suburb, the various merchants went off one by one to their hotels and inns. Master and disciples walked inside the city where they came upon a College of Interpreters and its posthouse. When Tripitaka and his companions walked in, the steward at once made this report to the clerk of the posthouse: "There're four strange-looking priests leading a white horse in here."

When the posthouse clerk heard that there was a horse, he knew that these visitors had to be on some sort of official business. He therefore went out to the main hall to greet them. Saluting him, Tripitaka said, "This humble cleric has been sent by imperial decree of the Great Tang to go see God at the Great Thunderclap of the Spirit Mountain and seek scriptures. I carry with me a travel rescript that I'd like to have certified at your court. I'd like also to borrow your noble residence for a short rest. We'll leave the moment our affair's concluded." Returning his salute, the clerk of the posthouse said, "This official residence was established precisely for the entertainment of honoured guests and messengers. It is my responsibility to extend our hospitality to you. Please come in. Please come in."

A highly pleased Tripitaka at once asked his disciples to come and present their greetings. When the posthouse clerk encountered their hideous visages, he was secretly horrified, not knowing whether these beings were human or demonic. Trembling all over, he forced himself to oversee the service of tea and maigre. Tripitaka, seeing how frightened he was, said to him, "Sir, please don't be afraid! Though my three disciples look ugly, they all have good hearts. As the saying goes, 'A savage face but a kindly person.' Nothing to be afraid of!" Calmed by these words, the posthouse clerk asked, "National Master where is the Tang court?"

"In the land of China," replied Tripitaka, "at the South Jambūdvīpa Continent."

"When did you leave?" the clerk asked again.

"In the thirteenth year of the reign period, Zhenguan," said Tripitaka. "I've gone through fourteen years and the bitter experience of ten thousand waters and a thousand mountains before arriving at this region."

"Truly a divine monk, a divine monk!" exclaimed the posthouse clerk.

Then Tripitaka asked, "And what is the Heaven-allotted age of your noble state?"

"Ours is the Great Kingdom of India," replied the posthouse clerk. "Since the time of the founder of our kingdom, Taizong,<sup>9</sup> it has been some five centuries already. The dad who occupies the throne at present is a person who has peculiar fondness for mountains and streams, flowers and plants. His dynastic name is Emperor Yizong, and the title of his reign period is Jingyan.<sup>10</sup> He has been ruling for twenty-eight years."

"This humble cleric," said Tripitaka, "would like to have an audience with him today to have our travel rescript certified. Do you know whether court is still being held?"

"Good! Good! This is precisely a good time!" said the posthouse clerk. "Our princess, the daughter of the king, has recently celebrated her twentieth birthday. At the intersection of the major thoroughfares, a festooned tower has been erected from which she will throw down an embroidered ball in order to determine which person she will take for her husband, the man ordained of Heaven. Today happens to be the very day of that exciting event, and I believe our dad the king has yet to retire from court. If you wish to have your rescript certified, this would be a good time to go do so."

Tripitaka was pleased, and he would have left at once had not he seen that a vegetarian meal was being served. He stayed, therefore, and ate it with the posthouse clerk and his three disciples.

It was past noon, and Tripitaka said, "I'd go now."

"I'll escort you, Master," said Pilgrim.

"I'll go too," said 8 Rules. Sand-monk said, "Second Elder Brother, you'd not. Your features aren't the most attractive. What will you do when you arrive at the court gate? Pretend that you're fat? Let Big Brother go."

"Awakened to Purity is quite right," said Tripitaka. "Idiot is rough and coarse but Wukong still has a little refinement." Pouting his horn, that Idiot said, "With the exception of Master, there's not that much difference in the way the three of us look!" Tripitaka put on his cassock, and Pilgrim picked up the document satchel to go with him. On the street they saw all the people – scholars, farmers, labourers, merchants, writers, the learned and the ignorant – saying to one another, "Let's go see the tossing of the embroidered ball!"

Standing by the side of the road, Tripitaka said to Pilgrim, "The people in this place – their clothing, their buildings, their utensils, their manner of speech and behaviour – are all the same as those of our Great Tang. I'm thinking now about the deceased mum of my secular home who met the man s he was destined to marry by throwing an embroidered ball, and they became man and wife. To think that they should have this custom here also!"

"Let us go, too, to have a look! How about it?" said Pilgrim.

"No! No!" said Tripitaka. "You and I are dressed improperly, as priests. People may get suspicious."

"Master," said Pilgrim, "have you quite forgotten the words of that old monk at the Benefactor-of-Orphans Gold-Spreading Monastery? We'd go see the festooned tower because at the same time we can distinguish truth from falsehood. In the midst of all this hurly-burly, that king must be concerned with the happy doings of his daughter. How'd he be bothered with the affairs of the court at this time? There's no harm in you and me going to the crossroads." On hearing this, Tripitaka did indeed follow Pilgrim to go watch the various people waiting for the embroidered ball to be tossed. Ah! Little did they realise that their going there was like *the fisher, casting down both hook and thread would henceforth haul up some intrigues instead!*

That King of India because of his love for mountains, streams, flowers, and plants led his queen and princess into the imperial garden last year 1 night to enjoy the moonlight. Their outing aroused a monstrous deviate who abducted the true princess while she herself falsely assumed the princess's form. Knowing that the Tang Monk would reach this region at that particular hour, day, month, and year, she wangled the wealth of the state to erect a festooned tower in order to take him as her mate. She was desirous of picking the vital energy of his true yang so that she would become a superior mortal of the Great Monad. It was now the third quarter past the hour of noon. Pilgrim and Tripitaka pushed through the crowd and approached the tower. Just then the princess, flanked by some seventy maidens all colourfully attired, held up high the lighted stalks of incense to pray to Heaven and Earth while an attendant stood by her holding the embroidered ball. That tower had eight exquisite windows; through one of them, the princess gazed at the crowd. When she saw the Tang Monk draw near, she picked up the ball with her own hands and tossed it at him. The ball landed on his head, knocking his Vairocana hat to one side. The Tang Monk was so startled that he tried to hold on to the ball with his hands. All at once the ball rolled into one of his sleeves. "It hit a priest! It hit a priest!" Those standing on the tower all began to shout. Aha! Those merchants and tradesmen at the crossroads all pressed forward to try to take the embroidered ball away. With a thunderous roar, Pilgrim gave his torso a stretch, teeth clenched, and immediately became an imposing figure some thirty feet tall and with a most ugly face. Those people became so terrified that they tumbled and fell, not daring at all to come near. In a moment they dispersed, and Pilgrim changed back into his original form. Meanwhile, the palace maidens and eunuchs, young and old, all descended from the tower to salute the Tang Monk saying, "Honourable man! Honourable man! Please enter the hall of the court to be congratulated!"

Tripitaka hurriedly returned their salutations and tried to raise them with his hands before turning to grumble at Pilgrim. "You ape-head!" he said. "You're making a fool of me again!"

"The embroidered ball hit *your* head," said Pilgrim, chuckling, "and it rolled into *your* sleeve. What has that to do with me? Why blame me?"

"What am I supposed to do now?" asked Tripitaka.

"Master, please relax," said Pilgrim. "Go into the court to have an audience with the throne while I return to the posthouse to tell 8 Rules and Sand-monk. We'll wait for your news. If the princess does not desire to take you for a husband, you'll simply have your travel rescript certified and leave. If she insists on taking you, you say to the king, 'Summon my disciples so that I may give them some instructions.' When we three are summoned into the court, I'll be able to distinguish the true from the false. This is my plot of Subduing the Fiend through Marriage." The Tang Monk had no choice but to agree, and Pilgrim turned to go back to the posthouse.

That elder, surrounded by the various palace maidens, was brought to the tower. The princess came down and led him by the hand to the imperial chariot that they then rode together. The entire entourage departed for the gate of the court. The Custodian of the Yellow Gate proceeded first to memorialise to the king, saying, “Your Majesty, the princess is leading back a monk who probably has been hit by the ball. They are now outside the gate awaiting your summons.”

The king was not pleased by what he heard. He would have liked to send the priest away but not knowing the wishes of the princess, he felt obliged to summon them inside. The princess and the Tang Monk thus went up to the Hall of Golden Chimes. Truly, this was what happened: *husband and wife both cried, “Your Majesty!” Both Good and Evil saluted most solemnly.* After the ceremony, the king asked them to ascend the hall as he posed this question, “Where did you come from, priest, and how’re you hit by our daughter’s ball?”

Saluting himself on the ground, the Tang Monk said, “This humble cleric is someone sent by the Great Tang emperor in the South Jambūdvīpa Continent to go worship God and seek scriptures from the Great Thunderclap in the Western Heaven. Since I carry with me a rescript for this lengthy journey, I’ve come especially to have an audience with the king to have it certified. My path took me past the crossing beneath the festooned tower, and I didn’t expect that I’d be hit on the head by the ball that the princess tossed. This humble cleric is someone who has left the family and who belongs to a strange religion. How could I dare become the spouse of royalty? I beg you, therefore, to pardon the mortal offence of this humble cleric, certify my rescript, and send me off quickly to the Spirit Mountain. When I’ve faced God and succeeded in acquiring scriptures to return to my homeland, I’ll establish a perpetual memorial to Your Majesty’s Heavenly kindness.”

The king said, “If you’re a sage monk from the Land of the East, you must have been, as it were, ‘Drawn through a thousand miles to marriage by a thread.’ Our princess has just celebrated her twentieth birthday and not yet married. Because it was determined that the year, month, day, and hour of this very day are all auspicious, we erected that festooned tower for tossing the ball to seek a good match for her. It just happened that you’re hit. We’re not pleased but we don’t know how our princess feels.”

“Dad King,” said the princess as she respected, “there’s a proverb that says, *if you wed a chicken, you follow a chicken; if you marry a dog, you follow a dog.* Your daughter after all made a vow earlier, when this embroidered ball was knitted. I made known to the deities of Heaven and Earth that I’d marry whomever the ball struck, for that would be the foreordained person. Today the ball struck the sage monk. This has to be the affinity of a past life which makes possible our meeting in this one. Dare I alter fate? I’m willing to take him as our royal son-in-law.”

Only then did the king show pleasure. At once he commanded the president of the Imperial Board of Astronomy to select the proper day for the wedding. He also asked for the preparation of the dowry and issued a proclamation to notify the entire kingdom. When he heard this however, Tripitaka did not express his gratitude. All he could say instead was, “Release me and pardon me!”

“This monk is most unreasonable!” said the king. “We’re using the wealth of an entire nation to take him in as a royal son-in-law. Why doesn’t he want to stay here and enjoy it? Why must every thought of his dwell on seeking scriptures? If he persists in his refusal, let the Embroidered-Uniform Guards push him out and have him beheaded!”

Scared out of his wits, the elder shook all over as he knelt down to respect and said, “I thank Your Majesty for your Heavenly kindness! But there are four of us altogether in our company, for this humble cleric has three disciples outside. I know I’d accept your gracious proposal but I’ve not yet had a chance to give them a word of instruction. I beg you, therefore, to summon them to court and certify this travel rescript, so that they may leave early and not be delayed in their journey to the West.”

The king consented and asked, “Where are your disciples?”

“They are all in the posthouse of the College of Interpreters,” replied Tripitaka. Immediately the king ordered the officials to summon the disciples to court so that they could pick up the travel rescript and leave for the West. The sage monk however, was to remain and become the royal son-in-law. The elder had little choice but to rise and stand in waiting to one side. For this situation we’ve the following testimonial poem:

*The no-leak<sup>11</sup> great elixir needs three perfections.<sup>12</sup>  
Austere works aren’t built on hateful relations.  
A sage must teach the Dao, you the self-cultivate;  
Blessings are Heaven’s, man must virtue aggregate.  
Let not the six organs<sup>13</sup> take their indulgent course.  
Nature, suddenly enlightened, reveals your source.*

*Without love without thought, you’re naturally pure – transcendence you’ll gain for deliverance’s sure.*

At that time, officials were sent at once to the posthouse of the College of Interpreters to summon the disciples of the Tang Monk. Pilgrim took leave of the Tang Monk beneath the festooned tower and walked back to the posthouse, giggling happily with each step he took. He was met by 8 Rules and Sand-monk who asked him, “Elder Brother, why’re you laughing so happily? Where’s Master?”

“Master has met great happiness!” replied Pilgrim.

“We’ve not reached our destination yet,” said 8 Rules, “nor have we seen a god and acquired scriptures. Where does this happiness come from?”

Giggling some more, Pilgrim said, “Master and I walked to the crossroads where the festooned tower was erected. Right there he was hit directly by the embroidered ball tossed down by the princess of this dynasty. He was then taken by the palace maidens and eunuchs to meet the princess who rode the imperial chariot with him to court. He will be taken in as the royal son-in-law. Isn’t that happiness?”

On hearing this, 8 Rules stamped his feet and thumped his chest, saying, “I knew I’d have gone there myself! It was all because of Sand-monk’s roguery! If you hadn’t stopped me, I’d have headed straight for the festooned tower. When the embroidered ball struck Old bull, the princess would have had to take me in. Wouldn’t that be nice? Wouldn’t that be marvellous? What a handsome, comely, and proper arrangement! We’d play and play! What fun!”

Sand-monk walked forward and scratched 8 Rules’ face with his finger, saying, “Aren’t you ashamed of yourself? What a magniloquent mouth! *With three coins you buy an old donkey and brag about its ridability!* If that embroidered ball struck you, a letter of annulment sent overnight wouldn’t be fast enough! Would anyone dare take a catastrophe like you inside the door?”

“A blackguard like you has no feeling for anything!” said 8 Rules. “I may be ugly but my person still exudes a certain flavour! As the ancients said, ‘Though the flesh and bones are coarse, the constitution is sturdy. Each characteristic in fact has its own desirability.’”

“Stop babbling like that, Idiot!” said Pilgrim. “Let’s get our luggage together. I fear that Master may be so harried that he will soon be summoning us to the court to protect him.”

“You’re wrong again, Elder Brother,” said 8 Rules. “If Master has become the royal son-in-law, he will go into the palace to make love to the king’s daughter. He is not going to climb mountains or traipse along the roads where he could meet fiends or encounter demons. Who needs your protection? At his age, you think he’s so ignorant of what goes on in bed that he requires your assistance?”

Grabbing him by the ears, Pilgrim shook his fist at 8 Rules and scolded him, saying, “You lecherous coolie! What sort of bunk is this?”

As they were thus quarrelling, the clerk of the posthouse arrived and said, “His Majesty has issued a decree and sent an official with an invitation for you three divine monks.”

“For what specific purpose?” asked 8 Rules. The posthouse clerk replied, “The old divine monk was fortunate enough to be struck by the princess’s embroidered ball and to have been taken in as the royal son-in-law. That is why an official has come with an invitation.”

“Where is this official?” asked Pilgrim. “Tell him to come in.”

The official, when he saw Pilgrim, at once saluted him. After the ceremony however, he dared not raise his eyes to look at him. All he could say to himself was, “Is this a demon or a fiend? A thunder squire or a Nature spirit?”

“Official,” said Pilgrim, “why don’t you speak up? What are you thinking of?” Trembling all over, the official held up the imperial decree with both hands and blurted out, “My princess invites you to meet her kin! My princess’s kin invite you to meet her!”

“We’ve no instruments of torture here,” said 8 Rules, “and we’ve no intention to beat you. Speak slowly. Don’t be afraid.”

“You think he’s afraid of a beating?” said Pilgrim. “It’s your face he’s afraid of. Pick up the pole and the luggage quickly and lead the horse along. We must go into court to discuss this affair.” Truly *it’s hard to sidestep for the way is straight; love will certainly be turned into hate.*

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4 priests are feted at the royal garden; 1 fiend vainly longs for sensual joys

Pilgrim Sun and his 2 companions followed the summons official to the gate of the court. The custodian of the Yellow Gate immediately notified them to enter. The 3 of them walked in together and stood still without however, even saluting. “Which three are the noble disciples of the sage monk, our royal son-in-law?” asked the king. “What’re your names? Where do you live? For what reason did you become priests? What scriptures you’re seeking?”

Pilgrim strode forward and wanted to ascend to the main hall. The guardians of the throne at once shouted, “Stop! If you’ve anything to say, speak up at once!”

“We people who have left the family,” said Pilgrim, smiling, “will advance one step when we’ve the chance to take one step.” After him 8 Rules and Sand-monk also drew near. Fearing that their vulgarity might upset the throne, the elder, standing on one side, stepped forward and said, “Disciples, His Majesty is asking for your origins. You’d present a proper reply.”

When Pilgrim saw that his master was standing in waiting on one side, he could not refrain from yelling, “Your Majesty, you slight others and you slight yourself! If you’ve taken in my master as the royal son-in-law, why do you make him stand? The world addresses your daughter’s husband as ‘Honoured Man.’ How can an honoured man not be allowed to sit?”

When he heard that, the king paled with fright. He would have withdrawn himself immediately from the hall had he not feared impropriety. Forcing himself to be bold, he asked his attendants to bring out an embroidered cushion for the Tang Monk to sit on. Only then did Pilgrim memorialise to him, saying, *“Old monkey’s ancestral home is located at the Water Curtain cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain in the Aolai Kingdom of the East Videha Continent. My dad’s Heaven, my mum Earth: I was born when a stone burst. Once a perfected man’s pupil, I mastered the Great Way ere returning to my divine home to congregate with my kind in the cave-heaven of a blessed land. In the ocean I subdued dragons; on the mountains I captured beasts. Having wiped out the register of death and placed our names in the book of life, I was appointed the Great Sage Equal to Heaven, to enjoy the towers of jade and roam the treasure lofts. I joined the celestial mortals to recite and revel every day; living in the sages’ realm, I’d great pleasures each morning. For disrupting the Peaches Festival and causing great havoc in Heaven, I was subjugated by God and pinned beneath the Mountain of Five Phases with but iron pellets for my hunger and copper juice for my thirst and not a drop of tea or rice for five centuries. Fortunately my master left the Land of the East; as he headed for the West, Guanyin delivered me from Heaven’s calamity. Free of my great ordeal, I made submission as a student of Yoga. My old name’s Wukong but people address me as Pilgrim.”*

When the king heard such an important pedigree, he was so impressed that he left the dragon couch immediately to walk forward and take the elder’s arm. “Royal son-in-law,” he said, “this must be our affinity ordained of Heaven that we may have you as a divine kinsman.”

Tripitaka thanked him profusely and asked him to ascend his throne once more. Then the king asked, “Who is your second noble disciple?”

Sticking out his horn to display his authority, 8 Rules said, *“In his previous disciple Old bull’s most fond of pleasure and sloth; my whole life’s chaotic, my nature confused and my mind deluded. I never knew Heaven’s height or Earth’s thickness, nor could I perceive this world’s breadth and length. In that leisurely existence I met suddenly a realised mortal who untied my net of retribution with half a sentence and with two or three words punched through my door of calamity. Immediately coming to myself, I took him at once as a teacher. With care I cultivated the work of two-eights<sup>1</sup> and smelted fore and after the time of three times three. <sup>2</sup>My work done I ascended into the palace of Heaven. By the great kindness of the Jade Emperor I was appointed Marshal of Heavenly Reeds, in command of the troops of Heaven’s river, roaming freely throughout the cosmos. For getting drunk at the Peaches Festival and dallying with Change, I was stripped of my rank and exiled to this mortal world. An erroneous disciple made me born in the form of a bull. A resident of Mount Fulling, I committed boundless evils when I met Guanyin who pointed out the way of virtue. I submitted to the Religious faith to give the Tang Monk protection on his way to the Western Heaven to salute and seek the wondrous texts. My religious name’s Aware of Ability but they call me Eight Rules.”*

These words made the king’s spleen shake and his heart quiver, and he hardly dared look at the speaker. Idiot however, became more energetic than ever; shaking his head, sticking out his horn, and raising both ears, he laughed uproariously. Fearing again that the throne might be terrified, Tripitaka snapped, “Eight Rules, behave!”

Only then did 8 Rules lower his hands, putting one over the other, and stand there pretending to be a gentleman. Then the king asked once more, “For what reason did the third noble disciple become a priest?”

Pressing his palms together, Sand-monk said, *“Old Sand’s originally a mortal man. Fear of the karmic wheel made me seek the Way, roaming cloudlike the edges of the sea and wandering at the shores of Heaven. As always my frock and alms-bowl followed me; long I taught my mind and spirit to stay put. For such sincerity I found a mortal mate; I nurtured the Baby<sup>3</sup> and married the Fair Girl. When my merit reached three thousand, my work harmonised the Four Signs, <sup>4</sup>I went beyond Heaven’s bound to salute at the mysterious height. Made the Great Curtain-Raising Warrior, I attended the phoenix-and-dragon chariot with appointed rank of general. At the Peaches Festival also I dropped and broke a crystal chalice for which I was exiled to the Flowing-Sand River. My head and features transformed, I sinned by taking lives. Fortunately the Nun going far to the Land of the East persuaded me to repent and wait for a Religious son of the Tang court who would go seek scriptures at the Western Heaven. Henceforth I stood in this renewal and sought once more the great awakening. I use the river as my surname; my religious name’s Awakened to Purity and they address me as Monk.”*

When the king heard that, he was filled with great joy but also great terror. What brought him joy was the fact that his daughter had taken a living God in for a husband but what brought him terror was that the man’s disciples were actually three monstrous deities. In that very moment, the chief imperial astronomer arrived to say, “The date of the wedding has been set for the fine day of *renzi*, the twelfth day of this month in this year. That day ought to be felicitous for the entire family, and it is thus fitting for a marriage to take place.”

“What day is today?” asked the king.

“Today is the eighth,” replied the astronomer, “the day of *moushen*, when the gibbons come to present fruits. It is thus a day appropriate for receiving the worthies and setting appointments.”

Exceedingly pleased, the king immediately asked the attendants to sweep out some towered buildings in the imperial garden, so that the royal son-in-law and his three disciples could use them for lodging. Thereafter he asked for the preparation of the wedding banquet so that the princess could get married. All his subjects reverently obeyed. After the king had retired from court, the various officials dispersed. Tripitaka and his disciples went together to the imperial garden. As it was getting late, a vegetarian meal was set out. Delighted, 8 Rules said, “It’s about time we eat after one whole day!” Those in charge toted in whole loads of rice and noodles. 8 Rules ate and ate; the more they brought, the more he ate. He did not stop till his guts were stuffed and his stomach was bloated. In a little while, lights were brought in and bedding spread out for each of them, so that they could sleep. When the elder saw that they were by themselves, he shouted angrily at Pilgrim, “Wukong! You wretched ape! You put me in a bind every time! I told you that all I wanted was to have the rescript certified and I told you not to go near the festooned tower. Why did you insist on taking me there to look? Now, have you seen anything good? We’ve ended up in this pickle. What are we going to do now?”

Trying to placate him with a smile, Pilgrim said, “The master’s statement that his deceased mum who also met the person destined for her by the tossing of an embroidered ball whereupon the two of them became man and wife, seems to indicate a longing for the past. Only because of that did old monkey lead you to the tower. Moreover, I thought of the words of that abbot from the Benefactor-of-Orphans Gold-Spreading Monastery, and I wanted to use this occasion to examine the true and the false. Just now when I looked at the king, I noticed that his complexion was somewhat dark and swarthy. But I’ve not been able to look at the princess to determine what she was like.”

“What would you be able to do if you saw the princess?” asked the elder. Pilgrim said, “The moment these fiery eyes and diamond pupils of old monkey see her face, they will be able to discern truth and falsehood, good and evil, wealth and poverty. Then I’ll be able to act to distinguish the right from the deviant.”

With loud giggles, both 8 Rules and Sand-monk said, “Elder Brother must have recently learned the art of physiognomy!”

“Those physiognomist,” said Pilgrim, “ought to be regarded only as my grandsons!”

“Stop gabbling!” snapped Tripitaka. “It appears now that they’re bent on taking me in. What’d we do really?”

Pilgrim said, “Let’s wait till the twelfth, the day of the wedding ceremony, when the princess undoubtedly will appear to pay homage to her parents. Let old monkey take a look at her from the side. If she were a real woman, it wouldn’t be too bad for you to become the royal son-in-law and enjoy the glory of a nation.”

These words sent Tripitaka into greater fury. “You wretched ape!” he cried. “You still want to injure me! As Aware of Ability puts it, nine-tenths of our journey has been covered already, and you still stab me with your hot tongue! Stop wagging it, and don’t you dare open that stinking mouth of yours! If you behave with such insolence just one more time, I’ll recite that spell to make life intolerable for you!”

When Pilgrim heard that he wanted to recite the spell, he was so horrified that he immediately went to his knees and said, “Don’t do that! Don’t do that! If she were a real woman, we’d wait till the time of the mutual salutes and then create havoc in the palace and get you out.” As master and disciples conversed, the announcement of the night watches began. Truly *the palace clock drips slowly; the floral scent spreads softly. The boudoir drops its pearly screen; in empty yards no lights are seen. The swings stand idle, showing only their shades; all is quiet as a Tangut flute fades. The moon on the blossoms confers her grace; the stars seem brighter in a treeless space. The nightjar ends her poem; the butterfly-dream is long. The Milky Way crosses the sky as white clouds to one’s homeland fly: a time when travellers feel the keenest pain, saddened by the wind-swept young willow-skein.* “Master,” said 8 Rules, “it’s late. If there’s anything important, discuss it tomorrow. Let’s go to sleep! Let’s go to sleep.” Master and disciples indeed enjoyed a restful night. Soon the golden rooster announced the arrival of dawn, and the king ascended the main hall for his early audience. See *the palace open, the purple aura high; wind-blown, royal poems rends the blue sky. Clouds move the leopard’s-tails<sup>5</sup> and banners shake; the sun hits carved dragons<sup>6</sup> and girdle-jades quake. Fragrant mist heightens the palace willow green; dew drops moisten the flowers’ imperial sheen. Midst shouts and exercises the ministers’ stand for peace and harmony reign over the land.* After the hundred officials, both civil and military, had paid their homage, the king gave this order: “Let the Court of Imperial Entertainments prepare the wedding banquet for the twelfth. For today however, let us make ready some spring juice and entertain our royal son-in-law in the imperial garden.” He also instructed the Director of the Bureau of Ceremonies to take the three worthy kinsmen back to the College of Interpreters. There they would be served a vegetarian feast by the Court of Imperial Entertainments. The staff from the Office of Poems would be asked to play at both the college and the garden so that all could be entertained while they spent time enjoying the sight of spring. When 8 Rules heard all this, he at once spoke up and said, “Your Majesty, since we, master and disciples made each other’s acquaintance, we’ve not been separated for a single moment. Today if you plan to eat and drink in the imperial garden, take us along and let’s play for a couple of days. That’s the way for you to make my master your royal son-in-law. Otherwise, I fear that you may find it hard to carry out this scheme.”

The king had already noticed 8 Rules’ hideous appearance and vulgar manner of speech. And when he saw him sticking out his horn and wagging his ears, constantly twisting his head and kneading his neck, he thought the speaker was showing signs of madness. Fearing that the marriage might be ruined, the king had no choice but to agree to the demands. “Prepare two tables,” said the king, “in the Eternal Pacification of the Chinese and Barbarian Loft where we’ll sit with our royal son-in-law. Three other tables are to be set up in the Spring-Detaining Arbour for those three guests. Master and disciples, we fear, may not find it convenient to sit together.”

Only then did Idiot salute and say, “Thank you!” before each person withdrew. The king also issued this order that the official in charge of the inner palace prepare another banquet, so that the queen and the consorts of three palaces and six chambers could assist the princess in putting on her headgear and present her with her dowry in anticipation of the fine match set for the 12<sup>th</sup>. By about the hour of the Serpent, <sup>7</sup> the king called for his carriage and invited the Tang Monk and his companions to go to the imperial garden. As they looked around, they saw a marvellous place indeed. *The path’s made of coloured stones – the railings bear carved patterns – the path’s made of coloured stones by the side of which rare blossoms grow. The railings bear carved patterns within and beyond which strange flora flourish. Lush peaches bewitch the kingfishers; young willows display the orioles. A walk brings quiet fragrance to fill your sleeves; a stroll makes much pure scent cling to your robe. A phoenix terrace and a dragon pool; a bamboo garret and a pine arbour. On the phoenix terrace, a flute bids phoenixes to come courteously; <sup>8</sup>in the dragon pool, fishes raised there change into dragons to leave. The bamboo garret has poems, all lofty rhymes composed with utmost skill; the pine arbour has essays, a noble collection of pearl and jade; green rocks form artificial hills; the winding stream’s azure and deep. The true-peony arbour, the cinnamon rose props, seem like thick damask and brocade spread out; the moli<sup>9</sup> fence, the Pyrus patch appear as mist or jade piled up. The peony has exotic scent; the Sichuan mallow shows rare glamour; white pears vie with red apricots for fragrance; purple orchids strive with gold daylilies for brilliance. The lichun flower, the wood-brush flower, and the azalea are all fresh and fiery; the crape-flower, the fengxian flower, and the jade-pin flower are all tall and trembling. Each spot of red ripeness seems like moistened rouge; each clump of dense fragrance is a brocade round. A joy’s the east wind recalling the warm sun; the whole garden’s lit up and with charms overrun.* The king and his several guests viewed this scenery for a long time. Then the Director of Ceremonies came to invite Pilgrim and his 2 brothers to go to the Spring-Detaining Arbour while the king took the Tang Monk to the Chinese and Barbarian Loft, each party being served separately. The poems and exercise, the decorations and appointments, were quite extraordinary. Truly *the Heaven-gate’s<sup>10</sup> rugged in the morning light. On dragon towers auspicious mists alight. The soft hues of spring the flora adorn; silk robes shimmer, struck by the rays of dawn. Like feastings of gods pipes and poems resound; with juices of jade the cups make their rounds. Joined in their fun are both subjects and king; a world at peace must prosperity bring.* When the elder saw what great esteem the king showed him, he had little choice but to force himself to participate in the revelry. Truly he showed delight without but harboured anxiety within. At the place where they were sitting, there were four gilded screens hanging on the wall, on which were painted the scenes of the four seasons. Inscribed on these paintings were poems, all compositions by noted scholars of the Hanlin Academy. <sup>11</sup>*The Poem of Spring says:*

*The cycle of nature has made its turn.  
The great earth quickens and all things seem new.  
Plums vie with peaches in their beauteous blooms; swallows pile on carved beams their scented dust.*

*The Poem of Summer says:*

*The south wind blows to cause our thoughts delay; the sun beams on k’uei<sup>12</sup> and pomegranate.  
A jade flute’s soft notes stir our midday dream when scent of water lily spreads to the drapes.*

*The Poem of Autumn says:*

*Of golden wells’ paulownia one leaf’s yellow.<sup>13</sup>  
Draw not the pearl screen for the night has frost.  
The swallows know it’s time to leave their nests as wild geese depart for another land.*

*The Poem of Winter says:*

*The rain clouds make the sky both dark, cold, and wind blows the snow to build 1000 hills.  
The palace’s a warm, red stove of course when plum blossoms overlay with jade the rails.*

When the king saw how intently the Tang Monk was staring at the poems, he said, “If the royal son-in-law finds the flavour of poetry so attractive, he too must be skilled in the art of reciting and composition. If you’re not parsimonious with your pearl and jade, please give a reply in kind to each of the poems, using the same rhymes. Will you do that?”

Now the elder was someone who could lose himself in such scenery, for his mind was enlightened by the vision of seeing a god-nature in all things. When he heard the king favouring him with such a request, he blurted out the sentence, “The sun melts the ice as the great earth turns.” Exceedingly pleased, the king said to one of the palace attendants, “Bring out the library’s four treasures.<sup>14</sup> Record the poetic replies of our royal son-in-law, so that we may slowly savour them.” The elder did not refuse. In delight he took up the brush to write *a Reply to the Poem of Spring:*

*The sun melts the ice as the great earth turns.  
This day the king’s garden blossoms anew.  
The people’re blessed with such clement clime for rivers and seas are rid of worldly dust.*

*A Reply to the Poem of Summer:*

*The dipper points south to cause the day’s delay.  
Ablaze are the huai<sup>15</sup> and pomegranate.  
Orioles and swallows midst the willow sing and send their lovely duet through the drapes.*

*A Reply to the Poem of Autumn:*

*Fragrant is the orange – green and yellow.  
The verdant pine and cypress love their frost.  
Brocade-like, the chrysanthemum’s half in bloom.  
Our poems resound through cloud and water land.*

*A Reply to the Poem of Winter:*

*The snow’s stopped but still the air’s cold when jagged rocks like jade surround the hills.  
The stove’s beast-shaped charcoals have warmed the milk. <sup>16</sup>  
We recite and lean on the rails, hands in sleeves.*

The king read the poems and he could not have been more pleased. “What a marvellous line!” he recited. ““We recite and lean on the rails, hands in sleeves!””

At once he asked the Office of Poems to set the poems to poems and perform them. They spent the day that way before dispersing. Meanwhile, Pilgrim and his two companions also abandoned themselves to enjoyment at the Spring-Detaining Arbour. Growing somewhat tipsy from the several cups of juice they each consumed, they were about to leave to look for the elder when they spotted him in a distant room with the king. His silly nature aroused, 8 Rules shouted, “What great fun! What comfort! Today I’ve had my enjoyment! As long as I’m full, it’s time to take a snooze!”

“Second Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, chuckling, “that’s not very dignified of you! With such a full stomach, how can you sleep?”

8 Rules said, “You’d not know about this. The proverb says, *if after a meal you don’t lie flat, your belly won’t get fat!*”

The Tang Monk took leave of the king and went to the arbour where he rebuked 8 Rules, saying, “You coolie! You’re getting rowdier! What sort of a place is this that you dare to shout and holler? If the king takes offence, you may lose your life!”

"It's nothing! It's nothing!" replied 8 Rules. "After all, we're related to him as in-laws, properly speaking, and he can't be offended by us. As the saying goes, *you can't cut off your kin with beating, nor can you your neighbour with scolding*. We're all having some fun. Why worry about him?"

"Bring that Idiot over here!" snapped the elder. "Let me give him twenty strokes with my priestly staff!" So Pilgrim pulled him over and bent him down while the elder raised his staff to strike.

"Dad royal son-in-law!" cried Idiot. "Please pardon me! Please pardon me!"

Those officials who had borne them company during the party persuaded the Tang Monk to stop. Scrambling up, Idiot could be heard muttering, "Dear honoured man! Dear royal son-in-law. The wedding hasn't even taken place, and you're administering royal law already!" Putting his hand over 8 Rules' mouth, Pilgrim said, "Stop jabbering! Stop jabbering! Hurry and go to sleep!" They spent another night in the Spring-Detaining Arbour, and by dawn, they feasted once more. They passed 3 or 4 days in such pleasure, and the auspicious day of the twelfth arrived. The officials from the three departments of the Court of Imperial Entertainments came to say, "Since receiving your decree on the eighth, your subjects have now finished building the royal son-in-law's residence, though we're still waiting for the dowry to furnish the place. The wedding banquet, too, is prepared. Altogether, both vegetarian and non-dietary, there're some five hundred tables." Delighted, the king wanted to ask his son-in-law at once to attend the banquet, when an official of the inner palace suddenly appeared and said, "Your Majesty, the queen wishes to have an audience." The king went inside, and found the queens of the three palaces and the ladies of six chambers chatting merrily with the princess at the Zhaoyang Palace. Truly they were like bouquets of flowers and rounds of brocade! All that opulence could rival even that of the lunar palace in Heaven, and it certainly was not inferior to the divine jasper residence. As a testimonial, we've four new poems based on the words of Joy, Meet, Fine, and Mate. *The Poem of Joy* says:

Joy! Joy! Joy!  
This happiness enjoy.  
A matrimony of love most seemly.  
Such smart palace fashion would rouse Change's passion.  
Those dragon and phoenix hairpins of luminous gold threads thin; those lustrous teeth and cherry lips, a body light as flower-slips.  
Layers of silk within the 5-coloured groves; lovely fragrance rising from beauties in droves.

*The Poem of Meet* says:

Meet! Meet! Meet!  
One seductive and sweet.  
Mao Qiang<sup>17</sup> she rivals and Chu<sup>18</sup> maids equals.  
A wrecker of city and state, fair like flower and jade.  
Her makeup is fresh and charming; jewels are more disarming.  
An orchid mind, nature lofty, ice-white flesh, and face most stately.  
Like distant hills her dark brows are painted thin; the regiment of silk she's fairest therein.

*The Poem of Fine* says:

Fine! Fine! Fine!  
A maiden divine.  
Profoundly lovely, truly praiseworthy.  
Rare fragrances combine with powder and carmine.  
The blessed Tientai off somewhere.  
Could it with a royal house compare?  
She speaks and smiles in form as fair as pipes and poems both rend the air.  
Pretty are 1000 forms of flower and silk.  
Scan the whole world but none's in her ilk.

*The Poem of Mate* says:

Mate! Mate! Mate!  
The orchid scents dilate.  
Mortal crowd and beauties proud.  
The maidens' colours fresh-born.  
The princess newly adorned: her coiffure rises like a crow's nest;  
Phoenix skirt beneath a rainbow vest.  
Celestial sonorities ahead; 2 rows of lovely purple and red.  
In years past she'd fixed a nuptial date; this day she's happy to meet her fine mate.

The king arrived in his carriage. The queen led the princess along with the consorts and palace maidens to meet him. Cheerfully the king entered the Zhaoyang Palace to take his seat. After the ladies had saluted to him, the king said, "Princess, our worthy daughter, we trust that the happy meeting with the sage monk when you tossed the ball from the festooned tower on the eighth has given you great satisfaction. The officials of various bureaus and departments, moreover, have been so considerate of our interests that all the preparations are now completed. Today is the auspicious day. You must make haste to attend the wedding feast, so that the goodly hour will not be forfeited."

Stepping forward, the princess raised her hand to salute and said, "Dad King, please pardon your daughter's ten thousand offences! There is a matter about which I must speak to you. For several days I've heard the palace officials say that the Tang Monk has three disciples who are exceedingly ugly. Your daughter dares not face them, for they will surely cause me great fear and dread. I beg the Dad King to send them out of the city so that my feeble body will not be harmed by fright nor our happiness ruined."

"If our child hadn't spoken of this matter," replied the king, "we'd have overlooked it. They are indeed quite hideous and wild. These past few days we've entertained them at the Spring-Detaining Arbour in the royal garden. We'll take this opportunity today to go up to the hall and certify their rescript. After they have been sent out of the city, we'll then hold our banquet." The princess respected to express her thanks. The king at once rode his carriage to the main hall where he issued a summons for the royal son-in-law and his three disciples.

Now the Tang Monk too had been counting the days with his fingers. When he reached the twelfth, he began even before dawn to discuss the matter with his disciples, saying, "Today's the twelfth. How are we to settle this affair?"

"I'd tell," said Pilgrim, "that the king has a certain gloomy aura about him. It has not however, penetrated his body yet, and I don't think it will cause him any great harm. But I still haven't had a chance to see the princess. If only she would come out! With one glance old monkey can tell us whether she is real or not, and only then can we do anything. You'd not worry, though. Today they will certainly call for us in order to send us three out of the city. You'd accept the summons without fear. In the twinkling of an eye I'll be back at your side to give you protection."

As master and disciples talked, the attendant to the throne and the Director of Ceremonies indeed arrived with a summons. Chuckling, Pilgrim said, "Let's go! Let's go! We're about to be sent off while Master will remain for the marriage."

"To send us off," said 8 Rules, "they must present some thousand taels of gold or silver. That'll be enough for me to get some gifts to go back to *my* in-laws. We'll have another wedding and a little fun!"

"Clamp your mouth, Second Elder Brother, and stop blabbering!" said Sand-monk. "Just let Big Brother make the decision." They took the luggage and the horse to follow the various officials to the vermilion steps. When he saw them, the king asked the three disciples to approach him, saying, "Bring us your travel rescript. We'll use our treasure seal on it. In addition, we'll increase your travel allowance and wish you a speedy arrival at the Spirit Mountain to see God. When you return with the scriptures, there will be further reward. The royal son-in-law will remain here, and you need not worry about him."

Thanking him, Pilgrim asked Sand-monk to take out the rescript to hand over to the king. The king read it before applying his seal and affixing his signature. Then he presented them with ten ingots of yellow gold and twenty ingots of white gold as wedding gifts. As he had always been both lecherous and greedy, 8 Rules immediately took them while Pilgrim gave a salute and said, "Much obliged! Much obliged!"

He turned and began to walk out. Tripitaka was so startled that he scrambled up and caught hold of Pilgrim. Teeth grinding audibly, he said, "Are you all abandoning me?"

Squeezing Tripitaka's palm with his hand, Pilgrim winked at him and said, "Relax and enjoy your union here. When we've acquired the scriptures, we'll return to see you." The elder seemed not to believe him and refused to let go. The other officials however, thought that master and disciples were indeed bidding each other farewell. Then the king asked the royal son-in-law to ascend to the hall once more while the other officials were to see the disciples off outside the city. The elder had to loosen his grip and went back to the hall.

Pilgrim and his two companions went out of the gate of the court and took leave of the officials. "Are we really leaving?" asked 8 Rules.

Without saying a word, Pilgrim walked back to the posthouse where they were received by the posthouse clerk. As he went to prepare rice and tea, Pilgrim said to 8 Rules and Sand-monk, "You two stay here and don't show yourselves. If the posthouse clerk questions you, just muddle through with some answer. Don't speak to me at all for I'm leaving to go protect Master." *Dear Great Sage!* He pulled off a piece of hair, blew his mortal breath on it, and cried, "Change!" It changed at once into a form of himself that remained with 8 Rules and Sand-monk in the posthouse. His true self leaped into mid-air and changed into a bee. See his *yellow wings, sweet mouth, and sharp tail – a mad exerciser lost in the gale, most able to pick the buds and steal their scent to make through willows his descent. He submits to both stains and dyes; hither and yon vainly he flies, never tasting that sweetness he helps distil. He has but his name for a will.* <sup>19</sup>*Look at him!* Ever so lightly he flew into the court where he found the Tang Monk sitting most dejectedly and with furrowed brow on a brocade cushion to the left of the king. Alighting on his Vairocana hat, he crawled near his ear to whisper, "Master, I'm here. Please don't worry."

Those few words of course were audible only to the Tang Monk and to none of those other mortals. When the Tang Monk heard them, he felt more reassured. In a little while, a palace official came to say, "Your Majesty, the wedding banquet's been laid out in the Magpie Palace. The queen and the princess are waiting there for the presence of Your Majesty and the honourable man." The king could not have been more pleased. At once he took the royal son-in-law inside the palace. Thus it is that *the deviant lord loves flowers, though flowers bring woe; the Chan-mind stirs to thought but thought begets sorrow.*

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### Falsely assuming true form, the jade hare's caught; True Yin returns to the right to join Numinous Source<sup>1</sup>

That Tang Monk dolefully followed the king into the inner palace where he heard the loud noise of poems and drums and encountered strong whiffs of rare perfume. Lowering his head, he dared not look up at all. Pilgrim however, was secretly delighted. Perched on his master's Vairocana hat, he exercised his magic perception and stared everywhere with his fiery eyes and diamond pupils. Two rows of palace maidens, colourfully dressed, stood in waiting, so enhancing the place that it seemed like a flower palace or divine residence and more attractive than the silken drapes in the breeze of spring. Truly they are *both graceful and lissom with substance like jade and flesh like ice. Pairs and pairs, more charming than Chu maidens; 2 by 2 they rival Xi Shi in beauty. Phoenixes rear up from coiffures piled high; like distant hills are moth brows faintly drawn. That graceful playing of reeds, frequent blowing of flutes – the tones – gong, shang, jue, zhi, and yu – <sup>2</sup>high and low make their lines flow. Wondrous poems and exercises ever lovable; silk and floral clusters all agreeable.* When Pilgrim saw that his master was completely unmoved, he said to himself in silent praise, "Marvellous monk! Marvellous monk! *Living midst silk and satin he's not enticed; walking through opulence he's not beguiled.*"

In a little while, the princess with the queen and the concubines thronging around her, walked out of the Magpie Palace to receive the king, all crying, "Long live Your Majesty! Long live Your Majesty!" The elder became so flustered that he shook all over, not knowing what to do at all. Pilgrim, on the other hand, at once perceived that there was a slight manifestation of monstrous aura on top of the princess's head, although it did not seem too virulent. He quickly crawled near his master's ear to whisper: "Master, that princess is a false one."

"If she is not a true princess," said the elder, "how can we make her reveal her true form?"

"By showing my religion body," replied Pilgrim, "I'll capture her immediately."

"No! No!" said the elder. "You might frighten the throne. Let the monarch and the queen retire first. Then you may exercise your magic power."

That Pilgrim however, had been impetuous all his life. *How'd I permit this?* With a roar he revealed his original form and dashed forward. Grabbing the princess, he cried, "You cursed beast! You make the false become real here! Isn't it enough for you to enjoy yourself at this place? Why must you be so greedy as to want to deceive my master and ruin his true yang to satisfy your lust?"

These words rendered the king dumb and stupid with fear and sent the queen and concubines tumbling all over. Every 1 of those gaily attired girls and palace maidens darted east and west, fleeing for her life. This was what their condition was like: *a spring wind breezy – autumn air blustery – the breezy spring wind passes garden and wood and 100 blossoms quiver; the blustery autumn air comes to the courts and myriad leaves flutter. The blasted peony falls beneath the fence and blown-up peony lies beside the rails. The shore’s hibiscus trembles; the steps’ chrysanthemum heaps up. The Pyrus turns feeble and sinks to the dust; the rose, still fragrant, lies in the wilds. The spring wind severs the lotus stalks; the winter snow crushes the plum’s young buds. Pomegranate petals scatter east and west in the inner palace; willow twigs by the shore dangle north and south of the royal mansion. In one night a wild storm of wind and rain does with dying redness the landscape stain.* More flustered than ever and shaking all over, Tripitaka embraced the king and said only, “Your Majesty, please don’t be afraid. Please don’t be afraid! This is how my mischievous disciple must work his magic power to distinguish truth and falsehood.”

That monster-spirit saw that things were going badly. She struggled free, ripped off her clothes, and flung away her earrings, bracelets, and jewels. Dashing into the shrine of the local spirit at the imperial garden, she took out a short, pestle-like club, turned and struck madly at Pilgrim. Pilgrim caught up with her and faced her with the iron rod. The 2 of them screaming and shouting, started a battle in the garden that continued in mid-air when both of them displayed their magic powers and mounted cloud and fog. In this very conflict, *the golden-hooped rod has both name and fame but a club like a pestle no one knows. 1 seeking true scriptures has reached this place; 1 for love of strange blossoms has come to stay. The fiend long knowing of the Tang sage monk, desires to unite with his primal sperm. Abducting the true princess the year before, she took human form as the king’s beloved. The Great Sage now perceives her monstrous air; he would save life by making known the truth. The short club works violence, bashing the head; the iron rod with power hits the face. Loud and boisterous the 2 of them fight as mist and cloud remove the sun from sight.* As the 2 of them waged a fierce battle in mid-air, they filled the populace of the whole city with horror and terrified the officials of the entire court. Supporting the king with his hands, the elder could only say, “Please don’t be afraid! Please tell our lady the queen and the rest not to fear. Your princess’s actually someone specious who’s taken on the true princess’ form. When my disciple captures her, you’ll know the difference.”

Several of the more courageous palace ladies took the clothing and jewels to show to the queen saying, “These’re worn by the princess. Now she’s abandoned everything. Stark naked, she’s fighting that monk in the sky. She must be a monstrous deviate.”

By then the king, the queen, and the royal concubines had grown calmer and began to stare at the sky. That monster-spirit battled the Great Sage for half a day, and they fought to a draw. Tossing the rod up into the air, Pilgrim cried, “Change!” The single rod changed into ten rods; the ten became a hundred, and the hundred turned into thousands. Like slithering snakes and gliding dragons in mid-air, these rods madly attacked the monstrous deviate. Completely flustered, the monstrous deviate transformed herself into a clear breeze and fled toward the region above the blue sky. Pilgrim recited a spell that reduced the iron rods to a single piece, before mounting the auspicious luminosity to give chase. When they approached the West Heaven Gate, they could see gleaming banners fluttering. “Those guarding the Heaven Gate,” shouted Pilgrim, “block the monster-spirit! Don’t let her escape!” The Deity-King Dhōtarāṣṭra indeed led the 4 Grand Marshals Pang, Liu, Gou, and Bi to bar the way each wielding his weapon. Unable to proceed, the monstrous deviate spun around and began to battle with Pilgrim once more, brandishing her short club. As he wielded his iron rod to meet her, the Great Sage stared at the club and saw that it was thick on one end and thin on the other. It resembled a pestle used for hulling grain in fact. “Cursed beast!” he cried. “What sort of weapon’s that you’ve there that you dare oppose old monkey? Submit at once lest one blow of my rod smash your skull!”

Clenching her teeth, the monstrous deviate said, “So you don’t know about this weapon of mine! Listen to my recital! *This divine root’s a piece of mutton-jade, its form cut and polished for countless years. I owned it already when Chaos parted; it’s my possession when the world began. No mortal thing could with its source compare for its nature came from Heaven above. Its golden-light frame with Four Signs accords with Three Primes<sup>3</sup> fused with Five Phases’ breaths. In Toad Palace<sup>4</sup> it has long stayed with me, a frequent companion by Cassia Hall. For love of flowers I came down to Earth and went to India, posing as a girl. I shared the king’s joys with no other wish than wedding the Tang Monk to seal my fate. How wicked you’re that you wreck our match! So savage that you hunt me down to fight! This weapon of mine’s tremendous fame, surpassing greatly your golden-hooped rod. A pestle for herbs in Vast-Cold Palace, <sup>5</sup>its one blow will send one to Yellow Spring.*”

On hearing this, Pilgrim laughed scornfully and said, “Dear cursed beast! If you had lived in the Toad Palace, you’d not be ignorant of old monkey’s abilities, could you? And you still dare take a stand here? Reveal your form and surrender at once, and I’ll spare your life!”

“I recognise that you’re the Ban-Horse-Plague,” said the fiend, “who greatly disturbed the Celestial Palace five centuries ago. I’d defer to you, I suppose. But ruining one’s marriage’s an act of bitter enmity like murdering one’s parents. Neither reason nor sentiment would allow me to give in. That’s why I’m going to fight you, Heaven-defying Ban-Horse-Plague!”

Now that word: Ban-Horse-Plague was most irksome to the Great Sage. When he heard them, he became enraged and immediately raised his iron rod to strike at her face. The monstrous deviate wielded her club to meet him, and right before the West Heaven Gate they locked in savage combat once more. In this battle, *the golden-hooped rod, the pestle for herbs, 2 weapons divine formed a worthy match that 1 for marriage descended to Earth; this 1 protecting the Tang Monk arrived here. The king actually was not quite upright – his love of flowers won a fiend’s delight and brought on this moment a bitter fight, both parties stirred to stubbornness and hate. They charged and sallied to see who would win; with taunts and slurs they waged a war of words. The mighty pestle was rare in the world; the rod’s divine strength had even more appeal. Golden beams flashing lit up Heaven’s gate; cold mists lambent spread throughout the Earth. They fought back and forth for over 10 rounds. The monster growing weak, now lost her ground.* That monster-spirit fought more than ten rounds with Pilgrim. When she saw how taut and fast the style of the rod was, she realised that it would be difficult for her to prevail. After one feeble blow with her club, she shook her body and changed into myriad shafts of golden light to flee toward the south. The Great Sage gave chase, and they suddenly reached a huge mountain. The monster’s golden light lowered and entered a mountain cave, completely disappearing from sight. Fearing that she might sneak back to the kingdom to harm the Tang Monk, Pilgrim took careful note of the shape of that mountain before reversing the direction of his cloud to return to the kingdom himself. This was about the hour of the Monkey. The king, tugging at Tripitaka, was still shaking all over. “Sage monk, please save me!” was all he could say. Those concubines and the queen, too were quite apprehensive when they saw the Great Sage dropping down from the edge of the clouds. “Master,” he cried, “I’m back!”

“Stand still, Wukong,” said Tripitaka, “and don’t alarm His Majesty. Let me ask you what’s in fact become of the princess?”

Standing outside the gate to the Magpie Palace with hands folded across his chest, Pilgrim said, “The false princess’s a monstrous deviate. At first I fought with her for half a day. When she found that she’d not prevail, she changed into a clear breeze and fled toward the gate of Heaven. I shouted for the celestial deities to bar her way. She changed back to her form and again fought over ten rounds with me. Once more she changed into shafts of golden light to flee to a mountain due south of here. I chased her there but couldn’t find her. Fearing that she may come back here to harm you, I came back to look after you.”

When the king heard this, he tugged at the Tang Monk to ask, “If the false princess’s a monstrous deviate, where’s our real princess?”

“Let me catch the false princess first,” Pilgrim responded at once, “and your real princess will naturally return to you.”

When the queen and palace ladies heard this declaration, their fears were lifted. Each one of them went forward, saluted low, and said, “I beg the sage monk to rescue our real princess and bring her back. When this whole affair has been cleared up, you’ll be amply rewarded.”

“This is no place for us to talk,” said Pilgrim. “Let His Majesty go to the main hall with my master. And let the queen and her companions return to their palaces. Have my brothers 8 Rules and Sand-monk summoned to the palace so that they may give my master protection. I can then leave to subdue the monster. In that way, proper etiquette for what is public and private will be observed, and I’ll be spared from worry. Please take note of what I’ve said, for it betokens a great deal of energy expended.”

The king was most grateful to follow his suggestion. Hand in hand, he walked with the Tang Monk to the main hall while the queen and the ladies returned to their own palaces. The king then asked for the preparation of a vegetarian meal and sent for 8 Rules and Sand-monk. In a little while the two of them arrived, and Pilgrim gave them a thorough account of what had taken place and enjoined them to protect their master with all diligence. Mounting the cloud somersault, Great Sage hurtled through the air and left. All those officials before the main hall saluted low to the sky, and we’ll leave them there for the moment.

The Great Sage Sun headed straight for the mountain to the south of the kingdom to begin his search. The monstrous deviate had fled there in defeat; on reaching the mountain, she crawled inside her lair and used pieces of rock to stop up its entrance. Terribly dismayed, she hid herself and kept totally out of sight. Pilgrim searched for a while but he could detect no movement whatever. Growing anxious, he made the magic sign with his fingers and recited a spell to summon into his presence the local spirit and the mountain deity for interrogation. The two gods arrived and immediately respected, both crying, “We didn’t know! We didn’t know! If we’d known, we’d have gone far to receive you. We beg you to pardon us.”

“I’ll not hit you just yet,” said Pilgrim. “Let me question you instead. What’s the name of this mountain? How many monster-spirits are to be found here? Tell me the truth and I’ll pardon you.”

“Great Sage,” those two deities said, “this mountain is named Mount Hairbrush. It has three rabbit lairs in it.<sup>6</sup> From antiquity till now there has never been any monster-spirit, for it is a blessed land of complete circularity. If the Great Sage wishes to find monster-spirits, he’d better stick to the road to the Western Heaven.”

Pilgrim said, “When old monkey arrived at the Kingdom of India in the Western Heaven, he discovered that the princess, the daughter of the king, had been abducted by a monster-spirit and left in the wilds. The monster-spirit assumed the form of the princess to deceive the king into erecting a festooned tower, from which she would toss an embroidered ball to select her husband. When I escorted my master beneath the tower, she purposely threw the ball on the Tang Monk, for she wanted to become his mate so that she could steal his primal yang through temptation. I saw through all that and revealed myself in the palace to capture her. Stripping off her human clothes and jewellery, she fought with me for half a day, wielding a short club called a pestle for herbs. Then she changed into a clear breeze to flee but old monkey caught up with her before the West Heavenly Gate, and we fought for another ten rounds or more. Realising that she could not prevail, she changed into beams of golden light and fled here. Why is it that she can’t be seen now?”

When the two deities heard this, they led Pilgrim at once to search the three rabbit lairs. They began with the one at the foot of the mountain; looking there, they could see only a few wild rabbits that were frightened away. When they searched their way up to the hole on the peak however, they at once spotted two huge slabs of stone blocking its entrance. “This has to be where the monstrous deviate is,” said the local spirit. “She must have crawled in there to evade your pursuit.”

Pilgrim lifted away the stones with his iron rod. The monstrous deviate was indeed hiding in there. With a loud whoosh, she leaped out and attacked with upraised pestle. Pilgrim wielded his iron rod to parry the blow, so terrifying the two deities that the mountain god backed up and the local spirit darted away. “Who asked you two,” whined the monster to the two of them, “to bring him here to look for me?” Barely able to withstand the iron rod, she fought as she retreated, rising to mid-air.

It was getting late, and the situation became more precarious. Growing more and more violent, Pilgrim was about to give her the coup de grace. Suddenly a voice rang out from the azure air of the 9-fold Heaven: “Great Sage, don’t raise your hand! Don’t raise your hand! Be lenient with your rod!”

Pilgrim turned to look and discovered the Star Lord of Supreme Yin, followed by the mortal Chang’e and other lunar goddesses, all descending in front of him on a pink cloud. Pilgrim was so startled that he quickly put away his iron rod and saluted to receive them, saying, “Old Supreme Yin where are you going? Pardon old monkey for not stepping out of the way!”

“The monstrous deviate opposing you,” said Supreme Yin, “happens to be the jade hare of my Vast-Cold Palace, the one who helps me pound the mortal drug of mysterious frost. On her own she picked open the gold lock and jade bolt and fled the palace for a year. I calculated that she might be in mortal danger at this moment, and that’s why I’ve come to save her life. I beg the Great Sage to spare her for this old man’s sake.”

“Yes! Yes! Yes!” said Pilgrim. “I dare not refuse you, of course! No wonder she knows how to use a pestle for herbs! So, she is the little jade hare! But I wonder whether the old Supreme Yin knows of her kidnapping the princess of the Kingdom of India. She speciously assumed the form of the princess in order to ruin the primal yang of a sage monk, my master. Her desire and her offence are really intolerable. How could she be spared so lightly?”

“You’ve no knowledge of this either,” said Supreme Yin. “The daughter of the king is no ordinary mortal. Originally she was the Lady White<sup>7</sup> of the Toad Palace. Eighteen years ago, after giving a slap to the little jade hare, she was overcome by mortal longings and went to the Region Below. The light of her soul found conception in the belly of the queen, and she was born to the royal family. Nursing the grudge of that single slap, this little jade hare ran away from our palace last year so that she could send Lady White into the wilds. But she should not have wanted to marry the Tang Monk, and this offence is certainly unforgivable. Fortunately you’re alert enough to discern the true and the false, so that she did not have a chance to ruin your master. I beg you, therefore, to pardon her for my sake. I’ll take her back now.”

“When you present me with this sort of karma,” said Pilgrim, chuckling, “old monkey dares not go against your wishes. But if you take away the little jade hare now, I fear that the king may not believe me. I hope, therefore, that Lord Supreme Yin and my mortal sisters will take the trouble of bringing the little jade hare to the kingdom and giving a clear testimony. In that way, not only the ability of old monkey will be made known but the reason for the descent of Lady White can also be told. Then we may ask the king to send for Princess Lady White, so that the purpose of manifest retribution may be clearly established.”

Consenting to what he said, Lord Supreme Yin pointed at the monstrous deviate and snapped, “Cursed beast! Aren’t you returning to what’s right?”

Rolling over on the ground, the little jade hare revealed her true form. Truly she has *sharp teeth and divided lips, long ears with little hair. Her body is a ball of fur-like jade; she can fly through mountains with paws outstretched. The creamy straight nose seems brightly frosted or thickly powdered; the shining red eyes can rival even white snow dotted with rouge. Hugging the ground, she is all fleecy like a bundle of silk; torso stretched out, she is argent like a silver-threaded frame. A number of times she drinks at dawn the clear dew of Heaven’s air and pounds long-life drug with a jade pestle rare.*



Delighted by the sight, the Great Sage trod the cloudy luminosity, leading the way followed by Lord Supreme Yin, Change and other lunar goddesses, and the jade hare. They arrived at the Kingdom of India about dusk, and the moon was just rising. When they neared the city, they could hear the roll of drums on the watchtower. The king and the Tang Monk were still in the main hall while 8 Rules and Sand-monk, along with many officials at the foot of the steps, were discussing the cessation of court. They saw a glowing sheen of coloured mists approaching from due south, its luminosity making the whole place bright as day. As they stared into the sky, they heard the Great Sage Sun crying out in a loud voice: "Your Majesty of India, please ask your queen and concubines to come out and look. Beneath this treasure canopy's the Star Lord of Supreme Yin and the mortal sisters on both sides of him are the lunar goddesses and Change. This little jade hare's the false princess of your household; she's now revealed her true form."

The king hurriedly assembled the queen, his concubines, the palace maidens, and gaily-attired girls to salute the sky and worship. He himself and the Tang Monk also expressed their thanks toward the sky by saluting low. All the households in the city also set up incense tables and respected, reciting the name of god. As they looked up into the air, Bullseye 8 Rules was moved to lust. Unable to contain himself, he leaped into the air and embraced a rainbow-skirted mortal, crying, "Sister, you and I are old acquaintances! Let's go play!"

Walking forward to grab hold of him, Pilgrim gave him a couple of slaps on the face and a scolding. "You vulgar Idiot!" he said. "Where do you think you're, that you dare vent your lust?"

"It's just a bit of slapstick," replied 8 Rules. "to dispel my boredom and have some fun! That's all!" That Lord Supreme Yin ordered the entourage to turn. With a goddesses, they took the jade hare back to the Lunar Palace while Pilgrim yanked 8 Rules back to the ground.

After thanking Pilgrim in the main hall, the king asked, "Since the false princess has been captured by the mighty magic power of the divine monk where is our true princess to be found?"

"That true princess of yours," replied Pilgrim, "did not come from mortal stock either. She was actually the mortal Lady White of the Lunar Palace. Because she slapped the jade hare once eighteen years ago, she thought of this world and descended to the Region Below where she was conceived in your queen who gave birth to her. Nursing this former enmity, the little jade hare last year picked open the jade bolt and gold lock and escaped to this place also. She kidnapped the Lady White and left her in the wilds before assuming her form to deceive you. This entire karmic process was told to me personally by Lord Supreme Yin himself. Today the false one has been removed; tomorrow you'll be asked to go search for the real one."

On hearing this, the king became both embarrassed and alarmed, hardly able to hold back the tears flowing down his cheeks. "Child!" he said. "Since I was enthroned in my youth, I've never even left the gate of the city. Where should I go look for you?"

With a smile, Pilgrim said, "No need to be upset. Right now your princess's feigning madness at the Benefactor-of-Orphans Gold-Spreading Monastery. Let's retire. By morning I promise you I'll return your true princess."

The other officials, too saluted themselves and said, "Let our king put his worries to rest. These several divine monks are Gods who're able to soar on the clouds and ride the fog. Most certainly they possess the knowledge of past and future. Let the divine monks go make a search tomorrow and undoubtedly they'll get to the end of the matter."

The king agreed and ordered the pilgrims again taken to the Spring-Detaining Arbour for their meals and lodging. By then it was almost the hour of the second watch. Truly *the moon is fair, the copper pots mark their times as wind wafts the tinkling of golden chimes. Spring has half faded and the nightjars weep; petals shroud the path for the night is deep. An idle swing the royal garden shades; the silver stream a jade-blue sky invades. None walks the streets or visits the bazaars when night's aglow with a sky full of stars.* They all rested that night, and we'll leave them for the moment. Because his demonic aura had been dispelled, the king's energy revived during the night. By the third quarter of the fifth watch, he appeared again to hold his morning court, after which he asked for the Tang Monk and his three disciples to come and discuss the matter of finding his daughter. The elder arrived and greeted him while the Great Sage and his 2 brothers also saluted. Returning their salutes, the king said, "We spoke of our child, the princess, yesterday. May I trouble the divine monks to look for her?"

The elder said, "The day before your humble cleric came from the East, by nightfall we'd entered a Benefactor-of-Orphans Gold-Spreading Monastery to ask for lodging. The priests there were good enough to accommodate our request. After dinner we took a stroll in the moonlight to go to look at the foundation of the old Gold-Spreading garden. Suddenly we heard the sound of lament. When we inquired into the matter, a priest of the monastery who was already over a century of age, sent away his attendants and told us, 'This is the source of that lament: Late spring last year, I was just meditating on the dialectical relation of the moon and our nature when a breeze brought to me the sounds of weeping and lament. When I arose from my mat and went down to the foundation of the Jetavana garden to look, I found a girl. On being questioned, she told me that she was the daughter of the King of India, blown to that place by a strong gust when she was enjoying the sight of flowers in the moonlight.' Since that old priest was quite knowledgeable in human propriety, he locked the princess in a quiet room. Fearing that she might be defiled by other priests in the monastery, he only told them that a monster-spirit had been locked up by him. The princess, too, understood his intentions; during the day she would babble absurdities just to win some sustenance of tea and rice for herself. During the night however with no one present, she would think of her parents and weep. That old priest had journeyed to the capital several times to try to ascertain the truth. When he learned that the princess, to all appearance, was in the palace and unharmed, he dared not present a memorial on the matter. When he learned however, that my disciple had some magic powers, he urged us repeatedly to make a thorough investigation. Little did we expect that the jade hare of the Toad Palace had become a monster and, falsely fused with the true form, had taken on the appearance of the princess. The monster, moreover, was hoping to ruin my primal yang, and it was fortunate that my disciple exercised his magic power to distinguish the true from the specious. Now the hare has been taken back by the Star of Supreme Yin but your worthy daughter may still be seen feigning madness at the Gold-Spreading Monastery."

When the king heard this meticulous account, he gave voice to loud weeping, so disturbing those in three palaces and six chambers that they arrived to make inquiry. When they learned of the cause, everyone wept profusely. After a long while, the king asked again, "How far is the Gold-Spreading Monastery from the city?"

"No more than sixty miles," replied Tripitaka.

The king at once issued this decree: "Let the consorts of the East and the West Palaces guard the main hall while the court's Grand Preceptor will defend the kingdom. We and the queen herself will take the many officials and the four divine monks to the monastery and bring our princess home."

Immediately carriages were lined up and they all went out of the court. Look at that Pilgrim! He leaped into the air and with one twist of his torso, arrived at the monastery before them. The priests there hurriedly knelt down to receive him, saying, "When the Venerable Dad left, he walked with the rest of his companions. Why did you descend from the sky today?"

"Where is that old master of yours?" asked Pilgrim, laughing. "Ask him to come out quickly, so that you may set up incense tables to receive the royal carriage. The king and queen of India are about to arrive along with many officials and my master."

The various monks could not quite comprehend what he was saying, and they asked the old priest to come out. When the old priest caught sight of Pilgrim, he bent low and said, "Venerable Dad, what've you found out about the princess?"

Thereupon Pilgrim gave a thorough rehearsal of how the false princess tossed an embroidered ball to try to wed the Tang Monk, he fought and chased her, and Lord Supreme Yin appeared to take away the jade hare. The old priest again respected to express his thanks. Raising him with his hands, Pilgrim said, "Stop saluting! Stop saluting! Prepare quickly to receive the imperial carriage."

Only then did those priests discover that a girl had been locked up in the back room. In amazement, they all went to help set up incense tables beyond the monastery gate. After putting on the cassocks, they began to toll the bells and roll the drums as they waited. In a little while the imperial carriage did indeed arrive. Truly *auspicious mists and fragrance fill the sky when to this rustic temple Grace draws nigh – like a timeless rainbow cleansing streams and seas, springtime lightning of sage kings' dynasties. Such kindness the sylvan beauty advances; moisture the wild floral scent enhances. For relics left by an ancient elder, this precious hall receives a wise ruler.* The king reached the monastery gate and was met outside by those monks in orderly rows. They all saluted themselves to receive him. Then he saw Pilgrim standing in their midst. "How did the divine monk manage to get here first?" asked the king.

"Old monkey arrived here with a mere twist of his torso!" said Pilgrim, chuckling. "Why did you people take half a day to do it?"

Thereafter the Tang Monk and the others arrived. With the elder leading the way, they went to the room at the back of the monastery where they found the princess still babbling and feigning madness. Going to his knees, the old priest pointed to the room and said, "Inside this room's the lady princess who's blown here last year by the wind."

The king at once ordered the door opened, and they removed the iron lock from the door. When the king and queen caught sight of the princess and recognised her face, they rushed forward to embrace her, not at all bothered by the filth. "Our poor child!" they cried. "What bitter fate has caused you to suffer like this here!" Truly the reunion of parents and child is not the same as any other kind of reunion. The three of them hugged each other and wailed. After they had cried for a while and had given expression to how greatly they missed each other, the king ordered scented liquid to be sent in for the princess so that she could bathe and change her clothing. They then climbed onto the imperial chariot together to return to the capital.

Afterward Pilgrim greeted the king once more with hands folded in front of him and said, "Old monkey has another matter to bring to your attention."

Returning his greeting, the king said, "We'll obey whatever instruction the divine monk's for us."

Pilgrim said, "They told me that in your mountain here, the one named Hundred-Legs, there're centipedes that've become spirits recently and harmed people during the night. The travellers and merchants have found that a great inconvenience. Since roosters are the natural foes of centipedes, I think you'd select a thousand huge roosters and scatter them throughout the mountain so that these poisonous insects will be eliminated. You'd change the name of this mountain also and bestow a building decree to this monastery as a token of your gratitude for this monk's care for the princess."

Exceedingly pleased, the king immediately sent officials into the city to fetch the roosters. The name of the mountain was changed to Precious Flower. The Bureau of Labour was told to provide the necessary materials for the repair, renovation of the monastery, and its name was changed to the Royal Benefactor-of-Orphans Gold-Spreading Monastery of the Precious Flower Mountain. The priest was appointed a monk-official with the perpetual title of Patriotic and an official salary of 36 stones. The monks saw the imperial carriage return to court after giving thanks where the princess entered the various palaces to be reunited with her kinfolk. Large banquets were prepared for celebrating her homecoming and reunion with her family. The king and his subjects also joined in the revelry, drinking and feasting all evening. The next morning the king issued the decree for portraits to be made of the 4 sage monks and mounted in the Chinese and Barbarian Loft. The princess was asked to come out to thank the Tang Monk and his 3 disciples once more for her deliverance with fresh clothing and makeup. The Tang Monk wanted to take leave of the king to journey westward after that but the king of course refused to let them go. Again they were feted for 5 or 6 days, thus providing excellent opportunities for Idiot to stuff himself repeatedly. When the king saw however, how eager they were in their desire to worship God, rejecting all entreaties for them to stay, he presented them with two hundred ingots of gold and silver and a platter of treasures. Master and disciples refused to take even a penny. The king then ordered the imperial carriage for the old master to ride in and many officials to escort him to a great distance. The queen, the concubines, the officials, and the people all respected without ceasing to express their thanks. When they reached the outskirts of the city, they saw the priests of the temple, too had come to salute and see them off, reluctant to take leave of the pilgrims. When Pilgrim saw that all the people were unwilling to turn back, he had no choice but to make the magic sign with his fingers and blew a mouthful of mortal breath toward the ground on the southwest. Immediately a gust of dark wind blinded the people's eyes and only then could the pilgrims proceed. Truly *cleansed by gracious waves to return to revealing cause, they left the sea of gold to awake to the true void.*

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Squire Kou gladly receives a noble priest; the elder Tang doesn't covet riches

The form of forms was first formless; the void of void's not void, too.

Hush, noise, speech, and silence the same we deem: why speak of dream within a dream?!

The useful is in use useless; no power empowers power like ripened fruits that redden on their own.

Ask not how they are trimmed and grown!

The disciple of the Tang Monk used his magic power to stop those priests from the Gold-Spreading Monastery. The priests thought that they had witnessed the descent of living gods after the dark wind subsided, no longer able to see the master pilgrim and his disciples. They therefore respected and returned to their own monastery. Master and disciples proceeded toward the West and once more it was the time of late spring and early summer. *The weather is pleasant and bright with pond-lotus coming in sight. Plums ripen after the rains; wheat in the wind its height attains. With their young river swallows fly; to feed their offspring pheasants cry. The Dipper's south, the day's at its longest; fair and happy all things seem strongest.* Countless times they rested at night and dined at dawn, fording the streams and climbing the slopes. On a peaceful road they journeyed for half a month and then they saw again a city ahead of them. "Disciples," asked Tripitaka, "what sort of place's this again?"

"I don't know! I don't know!" replied Pilgrim.

"You've taken this road before," said 8 Rules, giggling. "How could you say you don't know? There must be something uncanny about this place. You're deliberately pretending to be ignorant just to play a trick on us."

"This Idiot is completely unreasonable!" said Pilgrim. "Though I've travelled several times on this road, I did it in the air. I mounted the clouds to go back and forth. Since when did I ever make a stop on the ground? There was no reason for me to investigate what was of no concern to me. That's why I'm ignorant. There's nothing uncanny here. Who wants to play a trick on you?"

As they talked, they came up to the edge of the city. Tripitaka dismounted to walk over the drawbridge and enter the gate. In a corridor by a long street, two old men were seated and conversing. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, "stand out in the middle of the road. Lower your heads and behave yourselves. Let me go up to the corridor to ask what place this is." Pilgrim and the rest indeed obeyed him and stood still.

The elder drew near, pressed his palms together, and called out, “Old patrons, this humble cleric salutes you.” Those two old men were just having a leisurely discussion – about the rise and fall, the gains and losses of past dynasties, about who were the sages and worthies, and about the great, lamentable fact that what had once been a heroic enterprise was now reduced to nothing – when they suddenly heard this salutation. They at once returned the greeting and said, “What does the elder wish to say?”

“This humble cleric came from afar to worship God,” said Tripitaka. “Having just reached your treasure region, I don’t know its name. I’d like to know also where I might find a family inclined to charity, so that I might beg a meal there.”

1 of the old men said, “This is the Bronze Estrada Prefecture behind which is the Numinous Earth District. If the elder wishes to have vegetarian meal, there’s no need for you to beg. Go past this archway and on the street running north and south, you’ll come to a towered-gate facing east guarded by figures of sitting tigers. This is the home of Squire Kou; before his door there’s also a plaque with the inscription:

10000 Monks Won't Be Barred

A distant traveller like you can enjoy all you want. Go! Go! Go! And don’t interrupt our conversation!”

Having thanked them, Tripitaka turned and said to Pilgrim, “This is the Numinous Earth District of the Bronze Estrada Prefecture. The two old men told me that beyond the archway on the street running north and south, there is a tiger-guarded towered gate facing east. That’s the home of Squire Kou where before the door there is a plaque bearing the inscription:

10000 Monks Won't Be Barred. They told us to go to that household to have a meal.

“The region of the West,” said Sand-monk, “is the land of God, so there must be people who wish to feed the monks. If this is only a district or a prefecture, there’s no need for us to have our rescript certified. Let’s go beg some food, and we can leave after the meal.”

As the elder walked slowly through the long street with his three followers, they aroused again such alarm and suspicion of those people in the markets that they all crowded around the pilgrims to stare at their features. Telling his disciples to remain silent, the elder kept saying, “Behave yourselves! Behave yourselves!” The three of them indeed lowered their heads and dared not look up. After they turned a corner, they came upon a broad street running north and south.

As they walked along, they saw a tiger-guarded towered-gate, on the other side of which there was hung on the wall a huge plaque with the inscription, Ten Thousand-monks Will Not Be Barred. “In this God land of the West,” said Tripitaka, “there’s no deception in either the foolish or the wise. I was not prepared to believe what the two aged men told me but what I see here confirms their story.” Always rude and impulsive, 8 Rules wanted to go in at once. Pilgrim said, “Idiot, let’s stop a moment. Wait till someone comes out. When we’ve obtained permission, then you may enter.”

“What Big Brother says is quite right,” said Sand-monk. “If we don’t observe proper etiquette, we may offend the patron.”

They rested the horse and the luggage before the gate. In a little while, an old retainer appeared, carrying in his hands a scale and a basket. When he suddenly caught sight of the 4, he was so startled that he abandoned his possessions and ran inside to report, “My lord, there’re four strange-looking priests outside!”

The squire leaning on his staff, was just taking a leisurely stroll in the courtyard, reciting repeatedly the name of God. The moment he heard this report, he threw away his staff and hurried out to receive his visitors. When he saw the 4 pilgrims, he was not intimidated by their ugliness. All he said was, “Please come in! Please come in!”

With modesty Tripitaka entered with his disciples. After going through a little alley, the squire led them to a building and said, “This building houses a god hall, the *Thread* hall, and the dining hall that’ll entertain the Venerable Dads. The building to the left’s where this disciple and his family live.”

Tripitaka was full of compliments as he put on his cassock to worship God. They ascended the hall to look around and they saw *fragrant clouds of incense and bright flames of candles; a hall filled with bundles of silk and flowers, 4 comers festooned with gilt and colours. On a vermilion prop a bell of purple gold hangs high; on coloured lacquered frames a pair of patterned drums are mounted. A few pairs of banners all embroidered with the eight jewels; 1000 gods all gilded in gold. An old bronze censer and an old bronze vase; a carved lacquered table and a carved lacquered box. From the old bronze censer arise unending curls of smoky fragrance; within the old bronze vase now and then the lotus displays its colours. 5-coloured clouds² fresh on the carved lacquered table; mounds of scented petals in the carved lacquered box. In a crystal chalice, the holy water’s clear and clean; in a lamp of glass, the fragrant oil burns brightly. The gold stone-chime’s 1 note lingers and resonates. Truly unsoiled by red dust in this precious tower a household God-hall nobler than a temple.* Having purified his hands, the elder took up incense to respect and worship. Then he turned to go through the proper ceremony of greeting the squire who said however, “Just a moment! We’ll do that in the *Thread* room.”

There they saw *square and erect cases – jade and gold boxes – in square and erect cases countless volumes of Thread pile up; in jade and gold boxes many notes and letters are collected. On the coloured lacquered table are paper, ink, brush, and ink-stone – all exquisite items of the study. Before the pepper-dusted screens are books, paintings, a psalter, and chess – all marvellous objects of real pleasure. A divine stone-chime of jade overlaid with gold is placed there; a grapevine mat that shields the moon and wind is hung there. The pure air makes one don a cheerful air; a chaste mind sets free the mind of Dao.* Having reached the place, the elder was about to go through the ceremony when he was stopped again by the squire saying, “Please take off your Divine robe.”

Tripitaka doffed his cassock and only then was he allowed to give his host the proper greeting. Then the squire also exchanged greetings with Pilgrim and his 2 brothers. He asked his servants to feed the horse and to place the luggage in the corridor. Only then did he inquire about the pilgrims’ origin. Tripitaka said, “Your humble cleric’s been sent by royal decree of the Great Tang in the Land of the East to visit the Spirit Mountain of your treasure region in order to seek true scriptures from the Religious Patriarch. I heard that your honoured household reveres the monks and that’s why I came saluting. I’d like to beg for a meal and then we’ll leave.”

His face beaming with pleasure, the squire smiled broadly and said, “Your disciple’s surname’s Kou. My given name’s Hong (Great) and style’s Dakuan (Liberality). I’m sixty-four years old. At the age of forty, I made a vow that’d not be fulfilled until I’d fed ten thousand-monks. This’s been going on for twenty-four years. I’ve kept a record of all those I’ve fed. Recently in my leisure hours I went through the names of the monks and discovered that I’ve fed nine thousand, nine hundred, and ninety-six persons. Only four more remain before I reach the number of perfection. It’s indeed my good fortune that Heaven’s sent me today you four old masters to complete this number. Please leave me your honoured titles and you must stay here for a month also. Please wait until we’ve performed the ceremony of the completion of a vow. Your disciple will then escort you all to the mountain with horses and carriages. Our region’s only some eight hundred miles from the Spirit Mountain. It’s not very far.”

Exceedingly pleased by what he heard, Tripitaka agreed to what he proposed. Several houseboys, old and young went into the squire’s residence to haul firewood and bail water. They also took out rice, noodles, and vegetables in order to prepare the dietary meal. All these activities led the aged wife of the squire to ask, “Where do these monks come from that they’ve to receive such special treatment?”

“When our master asked these four noble priests about their origin,” replied the houseboys, “one of them said that they’re sent by the Great Tang emperor to worship our Holy Dad in the Spirit Mountain. Who knows how great a distance they’ve covered to reach our place but our master said that they came from Heaven. He told us to prepare a vegetarian meal quickly to entertain them.”

Delighted also by what she heard, the old woman said to her maid, “Get me some clothes. I want to go meet them also.”

“Madam,” said 1 of the houseboys, “you want to meet only one of them, not the other three. Their features are extremely ugly!”

“You people’re just ignorant,” said the old woman. “When the features are ugly, strange, or extraordinary, they must belong to celestial beings descending to the Region Below. Run along now and announce my presence to your master.”

The houseboys dashed out to the *Thread* hall to say to the squire, “Madam’s here. She wishes to meet the venerable dads of the Land of the East.”

On hearing this, Tripitaka rose from his seat as the old woman arrived at the hall. She raised her eyes and scrutinized the dignified and handsome features of the Tang Monk. Then she turned to look at Pilgrim and his two companions whose appearances were extraordinary indeed!

Though she thought that they were celestial beings descended to Earth, she did feel a little nervous as she went to her knees to salute them. Tripitaka said hurriedly returning her salutation, “The nun’s erroneously paid us great homage.”

The old woman asked the squire, “Why aren’t these four masters sitting together?”

Sticking out his horn, 8 Rules said, “We three are only disciples!” *Ee! That one declaration of his seemed like a tiger’s roar deep in the mountain!*

The old woman became more frightened than ever. As they spoke, another houseboy came to say, “The two uncles have arrived.”

Turning quickly to look, Tripitaka found 2 young scholars<sup>3</sup> who walked up the *Thread* hall and bent low toward the elder. Tripitaka hastily returned their greetings while the squire tugged at him and said, “These are my two sons, named Kou Liang (Beam) and Kou Dong (Pillar). They have just returned from school and haven’t had their lunch yet. Learning of the master’s arrival, they have come to salute you.” Delighted, Tripitaka said, “Excellent! Excellent! Truly to *exalt your house doing good’s the rule. To have good sons you must send them to school.*”

“Where did this Venerable Dad come from?” the 2 young men asked their dad.

“From a great distance,” replied the squire, laughing. “He is someone sent by the Great Tang emperor in the Land of the East, at the South Jambūdvīpa Continent, to go see the Holy Dad God at Spirit Mountain and acquire scriptures.”

One scholar said, “I read in *A Guide through the Forest of Affairs*<sup>4</sup> that the world is divided into four continents. Our region here belongs to the West Aparagodāniya Continent, and there is also an East East-Videha Continent. I wonder how many years it took him to travel from South Jambūdvīpa to this place?”

With a smile, Tripitaka said, “This humble cleric on his journey has spent more days in being delayed than in travelling. Frequently I fell to poisonous demons and savage fiends, to thousands of bitter ordeals. I’m fortunate to have the protection of my three disciples. Altogether I’ve experienced fourteen summers and winters before arriving at your treasure region.”

When they heard this, the 2 scholars paid him effusive compliments saying, “Truly a divine monk! Truly a divine monk!”

Hardly had they finished speaking when a young boy came to say, “The maigre’s been spread out. We invite the Venerable Dads to partake.”

The squire asked his wife to return to their residence with his sons. He himself accompanied the four pilgrims to the dining hall for the meal. The appointments in the hall were arranged in a most orderly manner with gilded lacquered table-tops and black-lacquered armchairs. The front row of food consisted of a *croquette-en-bouche* of 5 colours, created in the latest fashion by the most skilful and artistic hands. In the second row there were five platters of little dishes while the third row had five plates of fruits. The fourth row had five big platters of snacks, every item delicious and fragrant. The vegetarian soups, the rice, the steamed dumplings and buns were all steaming hot and most appetizing. Seven or eight houseboys dashed back and forth to serve them and 4 or 5 chefs never stopped working. *Look at them!* Some brought in soup while others added rice; coming and going, they were like meteors chasing the moon. Bullseye 8 Rules swallowed a bowlful with 1 gulp and he went after the food like wind sweeping away the clouds. Master and disciples thus enjoyed a full meal. The elder rose and was about to leave immediately having thanked the squire for the maigre. Stopping him, the squire said, “Old teacher, please relax and stay for a few days. As the proverb says: *Beginning’s easy but the end’s hard.* Please wait till I’ve performed the rite of completion. Only then I’d dare escort you on your way.” When Tripitaka saw how sincere and earnest he was, he had no choice but to remain. Not until a week or so had gone by did the squire invite some 24 local Religious priests to conduct a service of the completion of a vow. The priests spent 3 or 4 days to compose the service and began the sacrifice having selected an auspicious date. Their manner of course was no different from that of the Great Tang. *They unfurled the huge banners and set up the gilded images, too; lifted high the tall candles and burned incense to worship. They rolled drums and tapped cymbals; blew on reeds and kneaded pipes. The little gongs and the flute’s pure tones all followed the Gongche notations. ³They struck up the poems and played for a while before beginning to recite the Threads aloud. 1ˢᵗ they pacified the local spirits; next called on divine warriors. They burned, sent off the documents, and saluted to God’s images. They recited the Peacock Thread, each sentence woe-dispelling; lighted the Bhaisajya Lamp, its flame both bright and blazing. They did the Water Penitential to dissolve guilt and enmity; proclaimed the Garland Thread to remove slander and strife. Triyāna’s wondrous law had the finest aim; 1 or 2 Śramaṇa were all the same.* For 3 days and nights it went on like that and at last the service was over. Thinking of Thunderclap, the Tang Monk wanted to leave. As he tried to thank his host, the squire said, “The old teacher’s so eager to leave! It must be that my preoccupation with the service these last few days has caused me to slight you in some manner and you’re offended.”

“I’ve greatly disturbed your noble residence,” replied Tripitaka, “and I don’t know how I can repay you. Dare I even speak of offence? It’s just that when my sage ruler escorted me out of the imperial pass, he asked me when I’d return. By mistake I replied that I’d be back in three years. Little did I expect that I’d be on the road for fourteen years! And I still don’t know whether I’d be able to acquire the scriptures! By the time I’ve taken them back, it will probably be another twelve or thirteen years. Would I not have violated the sage decree? What unbearable crime would that be? I beg the old squire to let this humble cleric proceed. Wait till I’ve acquired the scriptures; then I’ll come back to stay a little longer at your mansion. That should be permissible.”

Unable to contain himself, 8 Rules shouted, “Master, you’re too insensitive to human wishes! You’ve no regard for human sentiments! The old squire must be a very rich man if he has been able to make such a vow to feed priests. Now that it is completed, and now that he is urging us so earnestly to stay, there’s no harm in our remaining a year or so. Why must you insist on leaving? Why should we abandon such ready-made provisions and resume begging from someone else? What old dad or mum’s family do you’ve ahead of you?”

“You coolie!” snapped the elder. “All you know is eating! You’ve never a thought for returning to your origin. Truly you’re a beast who cares only for *eating in the trough to ease your belly’s itch!* Since you crave so much to indulge in this deluded passion, I’ll leave tomorrow by myself.”

When Pilgrim saw that even the colour of his master’s face had changed, he grabbed 8 Rules and pounded him with his fists. “This Idiot’s,” he cried, “knowing no better, caused Master to blame even us!”

“That’s a good beating! That’s a good beating!” said Sand-monk, chuckling. “Even when he’s silent as he is now, he annoys people! Wait till he butts in again with his mouth!” In a huff, Idiot stood to one side and dared not utter another word. When the squire saw that master and disciples had become agitated, he tried to placate them with a broad smile, saying, “Please calm yourself, old teacher, and bear with us for one more day. Tomorrow I’ll prepare some banners and drums and invite a few relatives and neighbours to see you off.”

As they conversed, the old woman appeared and said, “Old Master, if you’ve come to our house, there’s no need for you to rush off so eagerly. How many days you’ve been staying anyway?”

“Already half a month,” replied Tripitaka.

“Let that half-month be counted as the meritorious service of the squire,” said the old woman. “I’ve accumulated a little cash from sewing too and hopes also of feeding the old master for half a month.” She had barely finished speaking when Kou Dong and his brother also came out and said, “Please hear us, you four Venerable Masters. Our dad fed the monks for over 20 years but he had never come upon a good person. Now he is lucky enough to reach the number of perfection only because of your arrival that has as it were, brought radiance to a thatched hut. Your students are too young to know much about karma but we do know the proverb: *What pa sows pa reaps; what ma sows ma reaps; one who sows not, reaps not.* The reason our parents wish to extend their hospitality’s just so that they may each attain certain karmic reward. Why must you refuse them so bitterly? Even we foolish brothers have saved up a small sum from our school allowances with which we, too, would like to entertain the Venerable Masters for half a month before we see you off.”

“Already I dare not accept the great kindness of your mum, the old Nun,” said Tripitaka. “How could I presume upon the affection of you worthy brothers? I truly dare not. I must leave this day, and I implore all of you to pardon me. If I remained, I’d have exceeded the imperial limit, and my crime would be even greater than one punishable by execution.”

When the old woman and her two sons saw that he was adamant, they grew angry and said, “Out of good intentions we wanted him to stay but he’s bent on leaving. All right! He wants to go, let him go! No need to chatter anymore!”

Mum and sons thereupon got up and went inside. Unable to restrain himself, 8 Rules spoke again to the Tang Monk, “Master, don’t overdo your playacting! As the proverb says, *to stay’s appropriate. Loitering irritates!* Let us stay here for one more month, just to satisfy the wishes of mum and sons. What’s the hurry?”

“Oh?” snapped the Tang Monk, and immediately Idiot gave his own mouth a couple of slaps, saying, “Shh! Shh! don’t talk! You’re making noises again!” On one side Pilgrim and Sand-monk began to giggle uncontrollably.

“What are you laughing at?” said the Tang Monk to Pilgrim, sorely annoyed.

Making the magic sign with his fingers, he was about to recite the Tight-Fillet Spell. So horrified was Pilgrim that he at once went to his knees to say, “Master, I wasn’t laughing! I wasn’t laughing! Don’t recite that spell, I beg you!”

When the squire saw that master and disciples were becoming even more rancorous, he dared not insist on their staying any longer. All he said was, “The Venerable Masters needn’t quarrel. I promise you that I’ll escort you on your way tomorrow.” He went out of the *Thread* hall and told his secretary to send over 100 invitations to his relatives and neighbours to join him in sending off in the morning the old master from the Tang court in his westward journey. In the meantime, he ordered the chefs to prepare a farewell banquet, his steward to have 20 pairs of coloured banners made up, find a band of poets, and drummers. A group of monks from the South Advent Monastery and a group of Daoists from the East Summit Abbey were to be ready to join the party by the hour of the Serpent in the morning. His domestic staff obeyed and left. In a little while, it was nightfall. After the evening meal, they all retired. *See a few crows to the village homeward fly. Drums and bells toll from distant towers high. Human traffic ceases in the street and mart; from all households lights and fires now depart. In moonlight and wind blossoms show their shade; the stars the obscure silver stream pervade. The night has deepened for the nightjars weep; the heavens grow silent when the earth’s asleep.* At the time it was no more than the hour between the third and fourth watch when those houseboys in charge of various affairs all rose early in order to complete their tasks. *Look at them! Those preparing the banquet rushed about in the kitchen; those making the coloured banners clamoured before the hall; those beckoning monks and priests sprinted on their 2 legs; those calling for poets hurled themselves forward; those sending out invitations darted east and west; those readying horse and carriage shouted back and forth.* From the hour of midnight, the tumult lasted till dawn. By about the hour of the Serpent, every business was concluded – with money of course! The Tang Monk and his disciples also rose early, attended by all those people. The elder at once gave the instruction to pack and to hitch up the horse. When Idiot heard that they were truly about to leave, he pouted his fat lips some more and grumbled incessantly but he had no choice other than to pack up the cassock and alms-bowl and pick up the pole and its load. Having brushed and scrubbed down the horse, Sand-monk saddled it and waited. Pilgrim handed the nine-ringed priestly staff to his master and hung the satchel containing his travel rescript on his own chest. They were about to walk out together when the squire came to invite them to a large sitting room in the rear where a huge banquet was spread out. The hospitality they encountered here was quite different from what they received in the dining hall in front. They saw *curtains loftily hung and screens on all 4 sides. Hung in the centre was a painting with the Aged Mountain and blessed sea motif; displayed on 2 walls were the scenes of spring, summer, autumn, and winter. From dragon-veined tripods rose incense smoke; auspicious air grew in crow-tortoise urns. The display-plates’ many colours showed vivid bejewelled floral patterns; the side tables’ mounds of gold held orderly rows of lion-god candies. Drums and exercises followed the graceful notes; brocade-like food and fruits were placed in the hall. Such refined vegetarian soup and rice! Such attractive fragrant tea and juice! Though this was a home of a commoner, it was not different from a noble’s house. Only a joyous hubbub could be heard that truly disturbed Heaven and Earth.* The elder was just greeting the squire when a houseboy appeared and said, “The guests have all arrived.”

These were all neighbours left and right, the wife’s brothers, the cousins, and the sisters’ husbands. There were also squires who had jointly pledged to keep a diet, and Religious believers. After all of them saluted ceremoniously to the elder, they took their proper seats as pipes and strings played below the steps and the feasting went on inside the hall. This sumptuous spread had the undivided attention of 8 Rules who said to Sand-monk, “Brother, let yourself go and eat! When we leave the Kou home, there’ll be no more rich fare like this!”

“What are you saying, Second Elder Brother!” said Sand-monk, chuckling. “As the proverb puts the matter *the hundred flavours of rare dainties are no more once you’ve eaten your fill. You may accumulate private savings but not in your stomach private hoardings!*”

“You’re much too feeble! Too feeble!” replied 8 Rules. “When I’ve eaten to the limits in one meal, I’ll not be hungry again even after three days!”

Hearing him, Pilgrim said, “Idiot, don’t puncture your belly! We’ve to be on the road!”

Hardly that they finished speaking when it was almost noon. The elder lifted his chopsticks to recite the *Thread* for the End of Maigre in his seat of honour. So alarmed was 8 Rules that he took up the rice, downed 1 bowl with a gulp, and put away 5 or 6 more bowls. Next he picked up those buns, rolls, cakes, baked goods, and stuffed both his sleeves full of them regardless of whether they were good or bad. Only then did he leave the table, following his master. Having thanked the squire and the other guests, the elder walked out of the door, encountering many colourful banners and treasure canopies, drummers and poets, on the other side. The 2 bands of Daoist priests and Religious monks were just arriving. With a smile the squire said to them, “All of you’re late and the old master’s eager to leave. There’s no time for me to present you with the maigre. Allow me to thank you when we come back.” Those pulling the carriages, riding horses, or walking all stepped aside for the four pilgrims to proceed. As they went forward, loud strains of poems and the roll of drums drifted skyward while banners and flags blotted out the sun. The whole place was clogged by people, chariots, and horses, as everyone came to see Squire Kou sending off the Tang Monk. The wealth and riches so displayed *surpassed the enclosures of pearl, jade, and rivalled those silken drapes of love.* Those monks played a Religious poem after which the priests struck up a Taoist melody, as they all escorted the pilgrims out of the prefectural city. When they reached the tenth-mile wayside station, food and drink were served, and they toasted each other once more as they bade farewell. The squire however, still could not bear to part with his guests. Blinking back his tears, he said, “When the Venerable Master returns after acquiring the scriptures, he must come to our house to stay for a few days. That’ll be the fulfilment of Kou Hong’s wish.”

Deeply moved, Tripitaka thanked him repeatedly saying, “If I reach the Spirit Mountain and get to see the Religious Patriarch, your great virtue will be the first to be told. On my return, I’ll surely stop at your door to express my thanks!”

Speaking in this manner, they went on for 2 or 3 more miles. The elder earnestly saluted to take leave of his host and the squire had to turn back, wailing loudly. *Truly vowing to feed monks, he’d return to wondrous knowledge; but with no affinity he could not see Siddhartha.* Squire Kou escorted the pilgrims to the tenth-mile wayside station and then returned with his other companions to his house. The master and his 3 disciples journeyed for some forty or fifty miles, when the sky darkened. “It’s getting late,” said the elder. “Where’ll we ask for lodging?”

Toting the luggage, 8 Rules pouted and said, “There’s ready-made rice but you’ll not eat it! There’s a house built with cool tiles but you’ll not live in it! All you want is to hurry on some journey like a lost soul going to a funeral! Now it’s getting late. If it rains, what’re we going to do then?”

“You brazen cursed beast!” scolded the Tang Monk. “You’re complaining again! As the proverb says, *Chang’an may be fine but it’s no place to linger in.* Wait till we reach the affinity of seeing the Religious Patriarch and acquire the true scriptures. When we return to the Great Tang and report to our lord, we’ll let you eat the rice from the imperial kitchen for several years. I hope you’ll become so bloated that you’ll die and become an overstuffed ghost, you cursed beast!”

Idiot giggled silently and dared not utter another word. Pilgrim peered into the distance and discovered several buildings by the main road. He said quickly to his master, “Let’s rest over there! Let’s rest over there!” The elder drew near and saw that it was a shrine that had collapsed. On top of the shrine was an old plaque on which there was an inscription written in 4 dust-covered, faded words:

Bright Light Travel Court

Dismounting, the elder said, “The Nun Bright Light was the disciple of a god of Flames and Five Lights. Because of his expedition against the Demon King of Poisonous Fire, he’s demoted and changed into the Spirit Officer of Five Manifestations. They must’ve a shrine keeper here.” They all went inside but they discovered that both rooms and corridors had toppled and there was no sign of any human person. They would have turned and gone back out were it not for the fact that dark clouds suddenly had gathered above and a torrential rain descended. They had little choice but to find whatever shelter they could in that dilapidated building and remain there in stealthy silence, fearing that they might otherwise disturb some monstrous deviates. Either sitting or standing, they endured a sleepless night. Ah! *Truly prosperity’s end breeds negativity; in pleasure you’d meet calamity, too.*

**Gold-dispensing external aid! meets demonic harm; the sage reveals his soul to bring restoration**

Let us not speak for the moment of the Tang Monk and his disciples who spent a night of discomfort in the dilapidated shrine of Bright Light to seek shelter from the rain. Instead, a group of violent men in the city located at the Numinous Earth District of the Bronze Estrada Prefecture who had squandered away their possessions through sleeping with prostitutes, drinking, and gambling. Without any other means of livelihood, those men – more than a dozen of them – banded together to become thieves. As they deliberated on which family in the city might be considered the richest and the 2<sup>nd</sup> richest for them to rob, 1 of them said, “There’s no need for investigation or calculation. There’s only one man here who is very rich and he’s that Squire Kou who sent off today the priest from the Tang court. In this rainstorm tonight, people won’t be out in the streets and the police won’t make their rounds. We’d strike now and take some capital from him. Then we can go and have some more fun whoring and gambling. Won’t that be nice?”

Delighted, the thieves all agreed. Taking up daggers, caltrops, staffs, clubs, ropes, and torches, they set out in the rain. Having broken through the gates of the Kou home, they rushed in with a shout. The members of his family, young and old, male and female, were so terrified that they all fled. The squire’s wife cowered under their bed while the old man hid behind a door. Kou Liang, Kou Dong, and his other children all scattered in every direction. Grasping weapons and torches, the thieves broke open the chests and trunks in the house and ransacked them for gold, silver, treasures, jewels, clothing, utensils, and other household goods. Agonized at parting with all his possessions, the squire risked his life to walk outside his house and plead with the robbers, saying, “Great Kings, please take what you need. But leave this old man a few things and some garments for his remaining years.”

Those robbers of course would not permit such discussion. They rushed forward and 1 kick at the groin sent Squire Kou tumbling to the ground. *Alas! His 3 spirits’ gloomily drifted back to Hades; his 7 souls slowly took leave of mankind.* After their success, the thieves left the Kou residence and climbed out of the city by means of rope ladders they set up along the rampart walls. They then fled toward the west through the night rain. Only when they saw that the thieves had left did the houseboys and servants of the Kou household dare show themselves. They immediately discovered the old squire lying dead on the ground. “O Heavens! Our master has been slain!” they cried, bursting into tears as they fell on the corpse to mourn him.

By about the hour of the fourth watch, the old woman began to think spitefully of the Tang Monk. *Because of his refusal to stay and enjoy their hospitality,* she thought, *they had to make such lavish arrangements to send him off and brought on themselves instead this terrible calamity.* Her rancour thus aroused her desire to plot against the 4 pilgrims. As she leaned on Kou Liang for support, she said, “Child, there’s no need for you to weep anymore. Your old man used to be so eager to feed monks. He wanted to do it one day after another. Little did he know that when he achieved perfection, he would run into a bunch of murderous monks!”

“Mum,” said the two brothers, “what do you mean by murderous monks?”

“When those savage robbers broke into our room,” replied their mum, “I hid under our bed. Though I was shaking all over, I managed to take a good look at them under the glare of torches and lights. Do you know who they were? The one holding a torch was the Tang Monk. Bullseye 8 Rules was holding a knife and Sand-monk was dragging out our silver and gold. The one who slew your old man was Pilgrim Sun.”

Thinking that what they heard was the truth, her two sons said, “If mom caught a clear glimpse of them, they’d be the robbers. After all, the four of them spent over half a month here and they must be completely familiar with the layout of our house – with the entrances, the walls, the casements, and the alleys. Wealth is a big temptation. That’s why they have taken advantage of this night’s rain to return here. Not only have they robbed us of our possessions but they have also slain our dad. How vicious can they be? In the morning we must go to the prefecture to file charges against them.”

“How’ll we word the complaint?” asked Kou Dong.

“Exactly as mum told us,” replied Kou Liang and this was what he wrote:

*8 Rules cried for slaughter; the Tang Monk held the fire. Sand-monk removed our silver and gold while Pilgrim Sun beat to death our sire.*

The whole family was in uproar, and soon it was dawn. They sent word immediately to their relatives to prepare for the funeral and purchase the coffin. Meanwhile, Kou Liang and his brother went to the prefectural hall to file their plaint. Now, the magistrate of this Bronze Estrada Prefecture was *upright all his life and his nature, virtuous. In his youth he had studied studiously and been examined at Golden Chimes. At all times, he had been a patriot, a man full of mercy and kindness. His fame would spread in history for a millennium as if Gong and Huang<sup>3</sup> reappeared; his name would resound forever in the halls of justice as if Zhuo and Lu<sup>4</sup> were reborn.* After he had ascended the prefectural hall and disposed of routine affairs, he ordered the display of the placard which announced that he was ready to hear and decide cases. The Kou brothers placed the placard in one of their bosoms and entered the hall. Falling to their knees, they cried, “Venerable Dad, these little ones wish to file a complaint on the weighty matter of robbery and murder.”

The complaint was handed over to the magistrate who, having read its content, said, “People said yesterday that your family, by feeding four noble priests, had fulfilled a vow. Those four, we’re told, happened to be Arhats from the Tang court, and they were sent off by you with a lavish band of drummers and poets clogging the streets. How could such a thing happen to you last night?”

Respecting, the two brothers said, “Venerable Dad, Kou Hong, our dad, had been feeding monks for some twenty-four years. It happened that these four monks coming from a great distance would just make up the number of ten thousand. That was why we’d a ceremony of perfection and asked them to stay for half a month. They thereby became thoroughly acquainted with the layout of our house. After we’d sent them off yesterday however, they returned during the night, taking advantage of the darkness and the rainstorm. With lighted torches and weapons, they broke into our home and took away our silver and gold, our treasures and jewels, and our clothing. Moreover, they slew our dad and left him on the ground. We beg the Venerable Dad to grant us humble folks justice!”

When the magistrate heard these words, he at once called up both cavalry and foot soldiers. Including other recruits and conscripts, they formed a posse of some hundred and fifty men. Each wielding sharp weapons, they went out of the western gate to pursue the Tang Monk and his 3 companions. Master and disciples waited patiently till dawn in the dilapidated building of the Bright Light Travel Court before emerging and setting out again toward the West. It so happened that those thieves who had robbed the Kou family the night before also took this same road after getting out of the city. By morning they had walked some twenty miles past the shrine. Hiding in a valley, they were dividing up their booty and had not quite finished when they saw the four pilgrims moving up the road. Still unsatisfied, the thieves pointed at the Tang Monk and said, “Isn’t that the monk who’s sent off yesterday?”

Then they laughed and said, “Welcome! Welcome! After all we’re engaged in this ruthless business! These monks have travelled quite a distance. And then they stayed for a long time in the Kou house. We wonder how much stuff they have on them. We might as well cut them off and take their belongings and the white horse. We’ll split the heist, too. Won’t that be a satisfying thing?”

Picking up their arms, the thieves ran up the main road with a shout. They stood in a single file across the road and cried, “Monks, don’t run away! Quickly give us some toll money, and your lives will be spared! If only half a no escapes from your mouth, each of you’ll face the cutlass. None will be spared!”

The Tang Monk, riding the horse, shook violently while Sand-monk and 8 Rules were filled with fear. “What shall we do? What shall we do?” they said to Pilgrim. “After half a night’s misery through the rain, we now face bandits blocking our path. Truly, ‘Calamity always knocks twice!’”

“Master, don’t be afraid!” said Pilgrim with laughter. “And don’t worry, Brothers! Let old monkey question them a bit.”

Dear Great Sage! Tightening his tiger-skin skirt and giving his silk shirt a shake, he walked up there with folded arms and said, “What do you all do?”

“This fellow has no idea of life or death!” bellowed one of the bandits. “How dare you question me? Don’t you’ve eyes beneath your skull? Can’t you recognise that we’re all Dad Great Kings? Hand us the toll money quickly, and we’ll let you through!”

On hearing this, Pilgrim smiled broadly and said, “So you’re bandits who pillage on the road!”

“Kill him!” shouted the bandits, turning savage.

Pretending to be frightened, Pilgrim said, “Great Kings! Great Kings! I’m a village priest, and I don’t know how to talk. If I’ve offended you, please pardon me. If you want toll money, you needn’t ask those three. All you need is to ask me for it, for I’m the bookkeeper. Whatever cash we’ve collected from reciting *Threads* or holding services, whatever we’ve acquired through begging or charity, they’re all in the wrap. I’m in charge of all incomes and expenditures. Though he’s my master, the one riding the horse only knows how to recite *Threads*. He has no other concern, for he has quite forgotten about wealth or sex and he doesn’t own a penny. The one with the black face is a labourer I took in halfway in our journey, and he only knows how to care for the horse. The one with a long horn is a long-term labourer I hired, and all he knows is how to tote the luggage. If you let those three past, I’ll give you all our possessions, including the cassock and the alms-bowl.”

When they heard this, the thieves said, “This monk is quite honest after all. Tell those three to drop the luggage, and we’ll let them go by.”

Pilgrim turned and winked at his companions. Immediately, Sand-monk dropped the pole and the luggage. He and 8 Rules led the horse and proceeded westward with their master. As Pilgrim lowered his head to untie the luggage, he managed quickly to scoop up a fistful of dirt that he tossed into the air. Reciting a spell, he exercised the magic of immobilisation. “Stop!” he cried and those bandits – altogether some thirty of them – all stood erect. Each of them with teeth clenched, eyes wide open, and hands lowered, they could neither talk nor move. Leaping clear from them into the road, Pilgrim shouted, “Master, come back! Come back!”

“That’s bad! Bad!” said 8 Rules, horrified. “Elder Brother is sacrificing us! He has no money on him, and there is neither silver nor gold in the wrap. He must be calling back Master for the horse. And he may be asking us to strip.”

“Second Elder Brother, stop that nonsense!” said Sand-monk, laughing. “Big Brother is an able person. Previously he could subdue even vicious demons and fierce fiends. You think he’s afraid of these few clumsy bandits? When he calls, he must have something to say. Let’s go back quick to have a look.”

The elder agreed; turning around the horse, he went back amiably and said, “Wukong, why do you call me back?”

“All of you see what these bandits have to say,” said Pilgrim. 8 Rules walked up to one of them and gave him a shove, saying, “Bandit, why can’t you move?” That man however, was completely oblivious and speechless. “He must be numb and dumb!” said 8 Rules. Chuckling, Pilgrim said, “They have been stopped by the magic of Immobilization of old monkey.”

“You might have stopped their bodies but not their mouths,” said 8 Rules. “Why can’t they make even a noise?”

Pilgrim said, “Master, please dismount and take a seat. As the proverb says, *there’s erroneous arrest but no mistaken release*. Brothers, push these bandits over and tie them up. We’ll tell them to confess, to see if they are new thieves or experienced bandits.”

“But we’ve no ropes!” said Sand-monk.

Pilgrim pulled off some hairs and blew his mortal breath on them. At once they changed into some thirty ropes. All the brothers worked together: they pushed over the bandits and bull-tied them. Then Pilgrim recited the spell of release, and the bandits gradually regained consciousness. Pilgrim asked the Tang Monk to take a seat above them before the three brothers, each holding his weapon, and shouted at the thieves, “Clumsy thieves, how many of you’re there altogether? For how many years have you engaged in this business? How much stuff have you plundered? Have you killed anyone? Is this the first transgression? The second? Or the third?”

“Dads, please spare our lives,” the thieves cried.

“Don’t yell!” said Pilgrim. “Make an honest confession.”

“Venerable Dad,” said the thieves, “we’re not accustomed to thievery, for we’re all sons of good families. Because we’re stupid enough to drink, gamble, and sleep with prostitutes, we’ve completely squandered our inheritances and properties. We’ve neither abilities nor money for our livelihood. Since we learned that Squire Kou in the prefectural city of Bronze Estrada had vast possessions, we banded together yesterday and went to pillage his household last night, taking advantage of the rain and darkness. We took silver, gold, clothing, and jewels. Just now, we’re dividing the loot in the valley north of the road here when we saw you coming. Someone among us recognised that you’re those priests whom Squire Kou sent off, and we thought that you must have great possessions also. When we saw, moreover, how heavy the luggage was and how swiftly the white horse trotted, we grew so greedy that we’re going to try to hold you up. We didn’t know that Venerable Dad had such tremendous magic power to imprison us. We beg you to be merciful. Please take away the things we stole but spare our lives.”

When Tripitaka heard that the Kou family had been robbed, he was so taken aback that he stood up immediately. “Wukong,” he said, “the old Squire Kou is so kind and virtuous. How could he bring on himself such a terrible calamity?”

“All because of his desire to see us on our way,” replied Pilgrim, chuckling. “Those colour drapes and floral banners, that extravagant display of drums and poems, all attracted people’s attention. That’s why these scoundrels moved against his house. It’s fortunate that they ran into us, so that we’d rob them of this great amount of silver, gold, clothing, and jewellery.”

“Since we’ve bothered the Kous for half a month but have nothing to repay their great kindness with,” said Tripitaka, “we’d take these belongings back to their house. Wouldn’t that be a good deed?”

Pilgrim agreed. With 8 Rules and Sand-monk, he went to the mountain valley and having packed up the stolen goods, put them on the horse. 8 Rules was asked to tote another load of gold and silver while Sand-monk toted their own luggage. Pilgrim would have liked to slaughter all those bandits with one blow of his rod but fearing that the Tang Monk would blame him for taking human lives, he had no choice but to shake his body once to retrieve his hairs. With their hands and legs freed, those bandits scrambled up and fled for their lives. Our Tang Monk then retraced his steps to escort the stolen property back to the squire. This act of his however, was like a moth darting into fire, a self-induced disaster! A testimonial poem for him says:

*Kindness repaying kindness’s a rarity for kindness can change into enmity.*

*To save the drowning you may go amiss. Think thrice before acting, you’ll live in bliss.*

As Tripitaka and his disciples proceeded to take back the stolen goods, they suddenly caught sight of a forest of swords and spears approaching them. Greatly alarmed, Tripitaka said, “Disciples, look at those weapons coming at us! What do they mean?”

“Disaster’s here! Disaster’s here!” 8 Rules said. “These must be the bandits we let go. They have taken up arms and banded together with more people so that they could return to contend with us.”

“Second Elder Brother,” said Sand-monk, “they do not look like bandits. Big Brother, take a careful look.”

“The evil star’s descended once more on Master,” whispered Pilgrim to Sand-monk. “These’re government troops out to catch bandits.”

Hardly had he finished speaking when the soldiers rushed up to them and had master and disciples completely surrounded. “Dear monks!” they cried. “After you’ve robbed and plundered, you’re still swaggering around here!” They surged forward and yanked the Tang Monk off the horse. He was immediately tied up with ropes, after which Pilgrim and his two companions were also bound and bull-tied. Poles were inserted through the loops so that 2 soldiers could carry one prisoner on their shoulders. As the entire troop went back to the prefectural city, hauling the luggage and herding the horse, this was the condition of the pilgrims: *Tripitaka Tang shook all over, speechless and shedding tears; Bullseye 8 Rules mumbled and grumbled, his feelings grievous and sour; Sand-Monk muttered and murmured, uncertain what to do; Pilgrim Sun giggled and tittered, about to show his power.* In a little while, the throng of government troops hauled their prisoners and recovered booty back into the city. They then proceeded to the yellow hall to make this report: “Venerable Dad, the recruits have captured the bandits.”

Sitting solemnly in the hall, the magistrate first rewarded his troops. Then he examined the recovered property before he sent for members of the Kou family to take it back. Finally he ordered Tripitaka and his companions brought before the hall for interrogation. “You priests,” he said, “you claim that you’ve come from the distant Land of the East and that you’re on your way to the Western Heaven to worship God. Actually however, you’re thieves who resort to clever devices to get to know the layout of a place in order to plunder and pillage!”

“Your Excellency, allow me to speak,” said Tripitaka. “This humble cleric is in truth not a thief. This is no lie, for I’ve with me a travel rescript which you may look at. All this came about because of our regard for the great kindness of Squire Kou who fed us for half a month. When we ran into the bandits on our way who had robbed the squire’s household, we took the stolen property and were about to return it to the Kou family as a gesture of our gratitude. Little did we expect that the soldiers would arrest us, thinking that we’re the thieves. Truly we’re not thieves, and I beg Your Excellency to exercise careful discernment.”

“Now that you’re caught by government troops,” said the magistrate, “you resort to this clever talk of your gesture of gratitude. If you met the bandits on the way, why didn’t you seize them also, so that you’d report to the proper official and repay the squire’s kindness? Why were there only four of you? Look! This is the plaint filed by Kou Liang who named you specifically as the accused. You still dare to struggle?”

When he heard these words, Tripitaka was scared out of his wits, like someone on a boat in a boiling sea. “Wukong,” he cried, “why don’t you come up here to defend us?”

“The booty is real,” replied Pilgrim. “What’s the use of defence?”

“Exactly!” said the magistrate. “With such evidence before you, you still dare to deny the charge?” He said to his subordinates, “Bring the head clamp. We’ll give this thief’s bald head a taste of the clamp before we flog him.”

Terribly flustered, Pilgrim thought to himself, "Though my master is fated to meet this ordeal, he should not be allowed to suffer too much." When he saw, therefore, that the bailiffs were preparing the ropes to make the head clamp, he said, "Your Excellency, please don't clamp that monk. During the robbery of the Kou home last night, it was I who held the light and the knife, and it was I who robbed and murdered. I'm the chieftain of the thieves. If you want flogging, flog me. They have nothing to do with this. Just don't release me."

On hearing this, the magistrate gave the order: "Let's clamp the head of this one first." Together the bailiffs looped the head clamp onto Pilgrim. When they suddenly tightened the rope, it snapped with a loud crack. They joined the rope and clamped again, and once more it snapped with a loud crack. After three or four times of clamping like this, the skin on Pilgrim's head did not even show a wrinkle. When they wanted to change ropes and make another clamp, someone came in to report, "Venerable Dad, Dad Junior Guardian Chen from the capital has arrived. Please go out of the city to meet him."

The magistrate immediately gave this order to the clerk of justice: "Take the thieves into the jail and guard them carefully. Wait until I've received my superior. We'll interrogate them some more." The clerk pushed the Tang Monk and his three disciples into the jailhouse. 8 Rules and Sand-monk however, had to carry their own luggage in. "Disciples," said Tripitaka, "how did this thing come to be?" "Master, get in! Get in!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "There're no dogs barking here. It's rather good fun!" *Alas!* The 4 of them were taken inside and they were all pushed onto the rack. Then belly compressors, head prongs, and chest straps were fastened to each of them. The prison guards then arrived and began a severe flogging. Hardly able to endure the pain, Tripitaka could only cry, "Wukong, what'll we do? What'll we do?"

Pilgrim said, "They want to beat some money out of us! As the saying goes: *settle down if you a nice place find; spend money when you're in a bind.* They'll probably ease up on us if we give them some money."

"Where do I've any money?" asked Tripitaka.

"If we've no money," said Pilgrim, "even clothing is all right. Give him that cassock of yours." On hearing this, Tripitaka felt as if a dagger had stabbed his heart. Since however, he could not endure the flogging any longer, he had little choice but to say, "Wukong, do as you wish."

Immediately Pilgrim cried out, "Officers, no need for you to beat us anymore. Inside of one of those two wraps we carried in, there is a brocade cassock worth a thousand gold. Untie the wrap and take it. Please leave us."

When those prison guards heard this, they all went to untie the two wraps. There were indeed several cloth garments and a satchel that were of no value at all. Then they came upon an object wrapped in several layers of oiled paper with shafts of luminous radiance coming through. They knew it had to be a good thing. When they shook it loose to examine it, they saw a garment of *bright, wonderful pearl appliques, sequins of rare Religious treasures; with coiled-dragon knots of brocade, and silk piping of phoenix made.* As they fought to have a look at such a marvel, they disturbed the prison warden who came to say, "Why are you all making such noises here?"

Going to their knees, the guards said, "Just now the old sire indicted these four priests who all belonged to a large group of bandits. When we gave them a little flogging, they offered us these two wraps. We found this object after we untied the wraps, and we didn't know what to do with it. To tear up the robe and divide it would be a great pity but if only one of us owned it, the others would receive no benefit. Fortunately the old sire has come along. We'll leave it up to you to decide for us."

The warden recognised that it was a cassock. He then examined the other items of clothing and the satchel. Next, he unfolded the travel rescript to have a look. When he saw the signatures and treasure seals of various nations, he said, "I'm glad I saw this in time! Otherwise you people might have brought a terrible disaster on yourselves. These monks are no bandits. Don't you dare touch their clothing! Wait till the grand sire interrogates them tomorrow, and we'll probably learn the real truth." When the guards heard this, they handed the wraps over to him. The warden tied them up as before and put them away for safe-keeping.

Gradually the night deepened; the drum-roll began on the towers as the night patrol shouted the watches. By about the third quarter of the fourth watch, Pilgrim saw that his companions had stopped moaning and had all fallen asleep. He thought to himself, "It was fated that Master should have this one night of prison ordeal. That's the reason why old monkey did not bother to dispute the judge or use magic power. Now that the fourth watch is almost over and the calamity is nearly completed, I must leave to make some plans so that we can get out of prison in the morning."

Look at the way he exercises his abilities! Reducing the size of his body, he at once got out of the rack and with one shake, changed into a midge to fly out through a crack between the roof tiles. It was a fair and quiet night of stars and a bright moon in the sky. Having determined the direction of the Kou house, he flew toward it. Soon he saw the bright flares of light coming from a house to the west. When he flew near it to look more closely, he discovered that it belonged to a family of bean-curd makers. An old man was tending fire while his aged wife was squeezing out the soybean milk.

Presently he heard the old man say, "Mum, Mr. Kou might have sons and wealth but he had no age. He was, you know, a schoolmate of mine when we're young. I'm five years his senior. His dad's name was Kou Ming, and at that time, they had no more than a thousand acres of farmland that they had leased out but they couldn't even collect the proper rental. By the time the son was twenty years old, the dad died and it was up to him to manage their property. It was a stroke of luck that he took for his wife the daughter of Zhang Wang (Prosperity). Her nickname was Needle-Pusher but she certainly brought prosperity to her husband. Since her entrance into his family, their lands yielded rich harvests and their rentals excellent returns. What they bought accrued value and what they sold made profits. Their assets by now must be worth a hundred thousand cash. When he reached his fortieth year, he began to devote himself to good deeds and managed to feed ten thousand-monks. Who would have thought that he would be kicked to death by bandits last night! How pitiable! He was only sixty-four years old and had reached just the right age to enjoy himself. Who would expect a person of such virtuous inclination to be rewarded by such a violent death? It's most lamentable! Most lamentable!" Every word of this statement was heard by Pilgrim.

By then it was the first quarter of the fifth watch, and Pilgrim flew right into the house of the Kou family. The squire's coffin had been placed in the main hall so that the family could hold a wake over the dead man. Lamps were lit at the head of the coffin, flowers and fruit arranged around it. On one side his weeping wife kept vigil, and his two sons also were kneeling there and weeping. Two of his daughters-in-law were bringing in two bowls of rice for offering.

Pilgrim landed on the head of the coffin and gave a cough. The two daughters-in-law were so terrified that they ran outside, their arms and legs flailing the air. Saluting themselves on the floor, the Kou brothers dared not move at all. All they could mutter was, "Dad! Loooo! Looo!..."

The old woman however, was courageous enough to give the head of the coffin a tap and said, "Old Squire, have you come back to life?"

Imitating the voice of the squire, Pilgrim replied, "No, I've not!" More frightened than ever, the two sons continued to respect and shed tears. All they could mutter was, "Dad! Looo! Looo!..." Forcing herself to be bold, the woman asked again, "Squire, if you've not come back to life, why are you speaking?"

"I've been sent back by King Yama in the custody of a ghost guardian," said Pilgrim, "so that I can speak to all of you. I'm supposed to tell you that Needle-Pusher Zhang has used her foul mouth and slanderous tongue to injure the innocent."

When the old woman heard her own nickname, she became so flustered that she fell to her knees and respected saying, "Dear old man! You're so old already and still want to address me by my nickname! What do you mean by my foul mouth and slanderous tongue? Which innocent person I've injured?"

Pilgrim bellowed, "Didn't you say something like this? *Eight Rules cried for slaughter; the Tang Monk held the fire. Sand-monk removed our silver and gold while Pilgrim Sun beat to death our sire.* Because of your slanderous words, good people have been made to suffer. Those four masters of the Tang court when they ran into the brigands on the road, took back our stolen property. They wanted to return that to us as a token of their gratitude. What an expression of goodwill! You however, drew up this specious plaint and asked your sons to file it with the official. Without carefully examining the case either, he sent them to prison. Now a god of the jailhouse, the local spirit, and the city deity are all so overwrought that they have reported the matter to King Yama. He in turn sent his ghost guardian to take me back home to tell you this: that you'd work for the monks' release at once. Otherwise, I've been authorized to cause trouble for a solid month here in the house. The entire household, old and young, including chickens and dogs, will not be spared!"

Again respecting, the Kou brothers pleaded with him, saying, "Daddy, please go back. Please don't ever harm the old and the young of this house. We'll hasten to the prefecture in the morning and file a petition for release and make our confession. All we want is peace for both the living and the deceased." On hearing this, Pilgrim cried, "Burn paper money! I'm going!" The whole family gathered at once to burn paper money.

With outstretched wings Pilgrim flew up and soared straight to the magistrate's house. As he looked down, he perceived light, for the magistrate had already risen. When he flew into the central hall to look around, he saw a painting hanging in the middle, the subject of which was an official riding a horse with black spots. Behind him were several attendants, one carrying a blue umbrella and another an armchair. Pilgrim, of course, could not tell what the story behind the painting was but he flew up to it and sett led in the middle of the scroll. Presently the magistrate emerged from his room and bent low to wash his face.

Suddenly Pilgrim made a loud cough, so scaring the magistrate that he dashed back into his room. After finishing his washing and combing his hair, he donned a long coat and came out once more to burn incense before the painting and intone this petition: "To the divine tablet of my deceased uncle, Duke Jiang Qianyi. Blessed by ancestral virtue, your filial nephew, Jiang Kunsan, succeeded in passing the second and third degrees. He is now favoured with the appointment to the magistrate of the Bronze Estrada Prefecture. To you we've offered night and day without ceasing incense and fires. Why, therefore, do you make a sound this day? I beg you not to work the work of a monster or evil spirit, lest the family members be terrified."

Chuckling secretly to himself, Pilgrim said, "So, this is the picture of his dad's elder brother!" He made use of the opportunity however, to say to the magistrate, "Kunsan, my worthy nephew, you've honoured your ancestral inheritance by ever being a clean and upright official. How could you, therefore, be so foolish yesterday as to have regarded four sage monks as bandits? Without making a thorough investigation, you sent them to jail. Now a god of the jailhouse, the local spirit, and the city deity are highly disturbed. They have reported the matter to King Yama who sent me in the custody of a ghost guardian to inform you that you'd examine every aspect of the case and quickly release them. If you don't do this, you'll be asked to go and answer for yourself in the Region of Darkness."

Alarmed by what he heard, the magistrate said, "Let my uncle withdraw his presence. When your humble nephew ascends the hall, he will immediately release them."

"In that case," said Pilgrim, "go burn paper money. I'll go back to report to King Yama." The magistrate thus added incense and burned paper money to offer his thanks.

Pilgrim flew out of the hall, and he found that it was beginning to grow light in the east. By the time he reached the Numinous Earth District, he saw that the district magistrate had already seated himself in the official hall. "If a midge speaks," thought Pilgrim to himself, "and someone sees it, my identity maybe revealed. That's no good." He changed therefore into the huge magic body: from mid-air he lowered a giant leg that completely filled the district hall. "Hear me, you officials," he cried, "I'm the Wandering Spirit sent by the Jade Emperor. I charge you that a worshipper of God's been wrongfully beaten in the jail of your prefecture, thus greatly disturbing the peace of the deities in the Three Regions. I'm told to impart this message to you, that you'd give him an early release. If there is any delay, my other leg will descend. It will first kick to death all the district officials of this prefecture. Then it will stamp to death the entire population of the region. Your cities finally will be trodden into dust and ashes!"

All the officials of the district were so terrified that they knelt down together to respect and worship, saying, "Let the noble sage withdraw his presence. We'll go into the prefecture at once and report this to the magistrate. The prisoner will be released immediately. We beg you not to move your leg, for it will frighten these humble officials to death." Only then did Pilgrim retrieve his magic body. Changing once more into a midge, he flew back inside the jail through the crack between the roof tiles and crawled back to sleep in the rack.

We now tell you about the magistrate who went up to the hall. No sooner had he displayed the placard announcing his readiness to hear a case than the Kou brothers took it in one of their bosoms and cried aloud on bended knees. The magistrate summoned them inside where they submitted their petition for release. When the magistrate saw it, he grew angry and said, "It was only yesterday that you filed a complaint of loss. We caught the thieves for you and the stolen property was returned to you. Why did you come today to submit petition for release?"

Shedding tears, the two of them said, "Venerable Dad, the spirit of your humble subjects' dad manifested itself last night to say to us, 'The sage monks from the Tang court were the ones who had originally captured the bandits. It was they who recovered our possessions and released the bandits. Out of goodwill they decided to send back in person the stolen goods in order to repay our hospitality. How could you turn them into thieves and send them to jail to suffer? So overwrought were the local spirit and the city deity that they reported the matter to King Yama. King Yama told me to come in the custody of a ghost guardian to tell you to file another petition with the prefecture for the release of the Tang Monk. Only that will avert further disasters. If you don't do this, both the old and the young of the family will perish.' For this reason, we've come to submit our petition for release. We beg the Venerable Dad to grant us our request."

When the magistrate heard this, he thought to himself, "Their dad happens to be a corpse that's still warm. A newly departed showing itself is not an unusual phenomenon. But my uncle has been dead five or six years. Why did he too show his spirit last night and ask me to release the prisoners? Hmmmm ... ! They must be wrongfully accused."

As he deliberated with himself, the district magistrate of the Numinous Earth District came running up the hall, yelling, "Your Honour! It's bad! It's bad! Just now the Jade Emperor sent the Wandering Spirit down here to order you to release quickly some good people from prison. Those monks you caught yesterday were not bandits. They are all sons of God on their way to acquire scriptures. If there is any further delay, all of us officials will be kicked to death. Our cities, including the entire population, will be trodden to dust and ashes." Paling with fright, the magistrate at once commanded the clerk of justice to issue a placard for the prisoners to be brought out. When this was done immediately, 8 Rules said sadly, "I wonder what sort of beating they'll give us today!"

With a laugh, Pilgrim said, "I promise that you'll not receive a single stroke. Old monkey's settled everything. When you go up to the hall, don't you kneel for he'll step down to ask us to take the seats of honour. Let me demand from him the return of our horse and luggage. If anything's missing, I'll beat him up for you to see."





The Tang Monk waved his hands while 8 Rules and Sand-monk bit their fingers, all crying, “Hard! Hard! Hard!” Pilgrim dashed back from the other side and pulled at 8 Rules, saying, “Idiot! Follow me! Follow me!” Lying flat on the ground, 8 Rules said, “It’s much too slippery! Much too slippery! Let me go, please! Let me mount the wind and fog to get over there.” Pushing him down, Pilgrim said, “What sort of a place do you think this is that you’re permitted to mount wind and fog? Unless you walk across this bridge, you’ll never become a god.”

“O Elder Brother!” said 8 Rules. “It’s okay with me if I don’t become a god. But I’m not going on that bridge!”

Right beside the bridge, the two of them started a tug-of-war. Only Sand-monk’s admonitions managed to separate them. Tripitaka happened to turn his head, and he suddenly caught sight of someone punting a boat upstream toward the ferry and crying, “Ahoy! Ahoy!”

Highly pleased, the elder said, “Disciples, stop your frivolity! There’s a boat coming.” The three of them leaped up and stood still to stare at the boat. When it drew near, they found that it was a small bottomless one.<sup>5</sup> With his fiery eyes and diamond pupils, Pilgrim at once recognised that the ferryman was in fact the Conductor God, also named the Light of Ratnadhvaja. Without revealing a god’s identity however, Pilgrim simply said, “Over here! Punt it this way!”

Immediately the boatman punted it up to the shore. “Ahoy! Ahoy!” he cried. Terrified by what he saw, Tripitaka said, “How could this bottom-less boat of yours carry anybody?” The Religious Patriarch said, “This boat of mine *since creation’s dawn has achieved great fame; punted by me, it has ever been the same. Upon the wind and wave it’s still secure: with no end or beginning its joy is sure. It can return to One, completely clean through ten thousand kalpas a sail serene. Though bottomless boats may never cross the sea, this ferries all souls through eternity.*”

Pressing his palms together to thank him, the Great Sage Sun said, “I thank you for your great kindness in coming to receive and lead my master. Master, get on the boat. Though it is bottomless, it’s safe. Even if there are wind and waves, it will not capsize.”

The elder still hesitated but Pilgrim took him by the shoulder and gave him a shove. With nothing to stand on, that master tumbled straight into the water but the boatman swiftly pulled him out. As he stood on the side of the boat, the master kept shaking out his clothes and stamping his feet as he grumbled at Pilgrim. Pilgrim however, helped Sand-monk and 8 Rules to lead the horse and tote the luggage into the boat. As they all stood on the gunwale, the Religious Patriarch gently punted the vessel away from shore. All at once they saw a corpse floating down upstream, the sight of which filled the elder with terror.<sup>6</sup>

“Don’t be afraid, Master,” said Pilgrim, laughing. “It’s actually you!”

“It’s you! It’s you!” said 8 Rules also.

Clapping his hands, Sand-monk also said, “It’s you! It’s you!”

Adding his voice to the chorus, the boatman also said, “That’s you! Congratulations! Congratulations!” Then the three disciples repeated this reciting in unison as the boat was punted across the water. In no time at all, they crossed the Divine Cloud-Transcending Ferry all safe and sound. Only then did Tripitaka turn and skip lightly onto the other shore. Here a testimonial poem says:

*Delivered from their mortal flesh and bone, a primal spirit of mutual love’s grown.  
Their work done, they become Gods this day, free of their former 6-6 senses’ sway.*

Truly this is what is meant by the profound wisdom and the boundless religion that enable a person to reach the other shore. The moment the 4 pilgrims went ashore and turned around, the boatman and even the bottomless boat had disappeared. Only then did Pilgrim point out that it was the Conductor God, and immediately Tripitaka awoke to the truth. Turning quickly, he thanked his three disciples instead. Pilgrim said, “We two parties need not thank each other for we’re meant to support each other. We’re indebted to our master for our liberation through which we’ve found the gateway to merit making and fortunately we’ve achieved the right fruit. Our master’s also to rely on our protection so that he may be firm in keeping both law and faith to find the happy deliverance from this mortal stock. Master, look at this superb scenery of flowers, grass, pines, bamboos, phoenixes, cranes, and deer. Compared with those places of illusory transformation by monsters and deviates which ones do you think are pleasant and which ones bad? Which ones are good and which evil?”

Tripitaka expressed his thanks repeatedly as every one of them with lightness and agility walked up the Spirit Mountain. Soon this was the aged Thunderclap Monastery that came into view: *its top touches the firmament; root joins the Sumeru range. Wondrous peaks in rows; strange boulders rugged. Beneath the cliffs, jade-grass and jasper-flowers; by the path, purple agaric and scented orchid. Divine apes plucking fruits in the peach orchard seem like fire-burnished gold; white cranes perching on the tips of pine branches resemble mist-shrouded jade. Male phoenixes in pairs – female phoenixes in 2s – male phoenixes in pairs make one call facing the sun to bless the world; female phoenixes in 2s whose radiant exercise in the wind is rarely seen. See too those mandarin duck tiles of lustrous gold and luminous, patterned bricks cornelian-gilt. In the east and the west stand rows of scented halls and pearly arches; to the north and the south, an endless sight of treasure lofts and precious towers. The Deity-King Hall emits lambent mists; the Religion-guarding Hall sends forth purple flames. The heap’s clear form; the Utpala’s fragrance. Truly a fine place similar to Heaven with lazy clouds to make the day long. The causes cease, red dust can’t come at all: safe from all kalpas is this great Religion Hall.* Footloose and carefree, master and disciples walked to the summit of Mount Spirit where under a forest of green pines they saw a group of female worshippers and rows of worshippers in the midst of verdant cypresses. Immediately the elder saluted to them, so startling the worshippers and female worshippers, the monks and the nuns, that they all pressed their palms together, saying, “Sage Monk, you’d not render us such homage. Wait till you see God and then you may come to exchange greetings with us.”

“He is *always* in such a hurry!” said Pilgrim, laughing. “Let’s go to salute those seated at the top!”

His arms and legs dancing with excitement, the elder followed Pilgrim straight up to the gate of the Thunderclap Monastery. There they were met by the 4 Great Lightning Guardians who said, “Has the sage monk arrived?”

Bending low, Tripitaka said, “Yes, your disciple Xuanzang’s arrived.”

No sooner had he given this reply than he wanted to go inside. “Please wait a moment, Sage Monk,” said the Lightning Guardians. “Allow us to announce your arrival first before you enter.”

1 of the Lightning Guardians was asked to report to the other 4 Great Lightning Guardians stationed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> gate and 1 of those porters passed the news of the Tang Monk’s arrival to the 3<sup>rd</sup> gate. Those guarding the 3<sup>rd</sup> gate happened to be divine monks who served at the great altar. When they heard the news, they quickly went to the Great Hero Hall to announce to Siddhartha, the Most Honoured 1 also named God: “The sage monk from the Tang court’s arrived in this treasure monastery. He’s come to fetch the scriptures.”

Highly pleased, Holy Dad God at once asked the 8 Nuns, the 4 Lightning Guardians, the 500 Arhats, the 3000 Guardians, the 11 Great Orbs, and the 18 Guardians of Monasteries to form 2 rows for the reception. Then he issued the golden decree to summon in the Tang Monk. Again the word was passed from section to section from gate to gate: “Let the sage monk enter.”

Meticulously observing the rules of ritual propriety, our Tang Monk walked through the monastery gate with Wukong, Aware of Ability, and Awakened to Purity, still leading the horse and toting the luggage. Thus it was that *commissioned that year, a resolve he made to leave with rescript the royal steps of jade. The hills he’d climb to face the morning dew or rest on a boulder when the twilight fades. He totes his faith to ford 3000 streams, his staff trailing over endless palisades. His every thought’s bent on seeking right fruit. Homage to God will this day be paid.* The 4 pilgrims on reaching the Great Hero Treasure Hall saluted themselves before Siddhartha. Thereafter, they saluted to all the attendants of God on the left and right. This they repeated 3 times before kneeling again before the Religious Patriarch to present their travelling rescript to him. After reading it carefully, Siddhartha handed it back to Tripitaka who touched his head to the ground once more to say, “By the decree of the Great Tang Emperor in the Land of the East, your disciple Xuanzang’s come to this treasure monastery to beg you for the true scriptures for the redemption of the multitude. I implore the Religious Patriarch to vouchsafe his grace and grant me my wish, so that I may soon return to my country.”

To express the compassion of his heart, Siddhartha opened his mouth of mercy and said to Tripitaka, “Your Land of the East belongs to the South Jambūdvīpa Continent. Because of your size and your fertile land, your prosperity and population, there is a great deal of greed and killing, lust and lying, oppression and deceit. People neither honour the teachings of God nor cultivate virtuous karma; they neither revere the three lights nor respect the five grains. They are disloyal and un-filial, unrighteous and unkind, unscrupulous and self-deceiving. Through all manners of injustice and taking of lives, they have committed boundless transgressions. The fullness of their iniquities therefore has brought on them the ordeal of hell and sent them into eternal darkness and perdition to suffer the pains of pounding and grinding and of being transformed into beasts. Many of them will assume the forms of creatures with fur and horns; in this manner they will repay their debts by having their flesh made for food for mankind. These are the reasons for their eternal perdition in Avīci without deliverance. Though Confucius had promoted his teachings of benevolence, righteousness, ritual, and wisdom, and though a succession of kings and emperors had established such penalties as transportation, banishment, hanging, and beheading, these institutions had little effect on the foolish and the blind, the reckless and the antinomian. “Now, I’ve here three baskets of scriptures which can deliver humanity from its afflictions and dispel its calamities. There is one basket of vinaya that speak of Heaven; a basket of treatises that tell of the Earth; and a basket of *Threads* that redeem the damned. Altogether these three baskets of scriptures contain thirty-five volumes written in fifteen thousand one hundred and forty-four scrolls. They are truly the pathway to the realisation of mortality and the gate to ultimate virtue. Every concern of astronomy, geography, biography, flora and fauna, utensils, and human affairs within the Four Great Continents of this world is recorded therein. Since all of you’ve travelled such a great distance to come here, I’d have liked to give the entire set to you. Unfortunately, the people of your region are both stupid and headstrong. Mocking the true words, they refuse to recognise the profound significance of our teachings of Śramaṇa.” Then God turned to call out: “Ānanda and Kāśyapa, take the four of them to the space beneath the precious tower. Give them a vegetarian meal first. After the maigre, open our treasure loft for them and select a few scrolls from each of the thirty-five divisions of our three canons, so that they may take them back to the Land of the East as a perpetual token of grace.” The 2 Honoured Ones obeyed and took the 4 pilgrims to the space beneath the tower where countless rare dainties and exotic treasures were laid out in a seemingly endless spread. Those deities in charge of offerings and sacrifices began to serve a magnificent feast of divine food, tea, and fruit – viands of 100 flavours completely different from those of the mortal world. After master and disciples had saluted to give thanks to God, they abandoned themselves to enjoyment. In truth *treasure flames, gold beams on their eyes have shined; strange fragrance and feed even more refined. Boundlessly fair the tower of gold appears; there are mortal poems that clears the ears. Such divine fare and flower humans rarely see; long life’s attained through strange food and fragrant tea. Long have they endured a thousand forms of pain. This day in glory the Way they’re glad to gain.* This time it was 8 Rules who was in luck and Sand-monk who had the advantage, for what the Religious Patriarch had provided for their complete enjoyment was nothing less than such viands as could grant them longevity and health and enable them to transform their mortal substance into mortal flesh and bones. When the four pilgrims had finished their meal, the two Honoured Ones who had kept them company led them up to the treasure loft. The moment the door was opened, they found the room enveloped in a thousand layers of auspicious air and magic beams, in ten thousand folds of coloured fog and hallowed clouds. On the *Thread* cases and jewelled chests red labels were attached, on which the volumes of the books were written in clerly script as follows:<sup>8</sup>

1. The Extinguishment Thread, 1 volume 748 scrolls
2. The Ākāśagarbha-Nun-religious Thread, 1 volume 400 scrolls
3. The Gracious Will Thread, Major Collection, 1 volume 50 scrolls
4. The Prajñāpāramitā-saṃkaya verse Thread, 1 volume 45 scrolls
5. The Homage to Bhūtatahātā Thread, 1 volume 90 scrolls
6. The Anāṣara-granthaka-rocana-garbha Thread, 1 volume 300 scrolls
7. The Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Thread, 1 volume 170 scrolls
8. The Lightningcchedika-prajñāpāramitā Thread, 1 volume 100 scrolls
9. A god-carita-kāvya Thread, 1 volume 800 scrolls
10. The Nun-piṭaka Thread, 1 volume 1021 scrolls
11. The Sūraṅgama-Fixity Thread, 1 volume 110 scrolls
12. The Arhavinīścaya-religionparyāya Thread, 1 volume 140 scrolls
13. The Avataṃsaka Thread, 1 volume 500 scrolls
14. The Mahāprajñā-pāramitā Thread, 1 volume 916 scrolls
15. The Abūta-religion Thread, 1 volume 1110 scrolls
16. The Other Mādhyaṃika Thread, 1 volume 270 scrolls
17. The Kāśyapa-parivarta Thread, 1 volume 120 scrolls
18. The Pañca-nāga Thread, 1 volume 32 scrolls
19. The Nun-caryā-nirdeśa Thread, 1 volume 116 scrolls
20. The Magadha Thread, 1 volume 350 scrolls
21. The Māyā-dālamahātantra mahāyāna-gambhīra nāyaguhya-paraśī Thread, 1 volume 100 scrolls

- 22. The Western Heaven Treatise, 1 volume 130 scrolls
- 23. A god-kṣetra Thread, 1 volume 1950 scrolls
- 24. The Mahāprajñāpāramitā Treatise, 1 volume 1080 scrolls
- 25. The Original Loft Thread, 1 volume 850 scrolls
- 26. The Mahāmayūṛi-vidyārājñī Thread, 1 volume 220 scrolls
- 27. The Abhireligion-kośa Treatise, 1 volume 200 scrolls
- 28. The Mahāsaṃghaṭa Thread, 1 volume 130 scrolls
- 29. The Sadreligion-puṇḍarika Thread, 1 volume 100 scrolls
- 30. The Precious Permanence Thread, 1 volume 220 scrolls
- 31. The Sāṅghika-vinaya Thread, 1 volume 157 scrolls
- 32. The Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda Treatise, 1 volume 1000 scrolls
- 33. The Precious Authority Thread, 1 volume 1280 scrolls
- 34. The Correct Commandment Thread, 1 volume 200 scrolls
- 35. The Vidyā-mātra-siddhi Treatise, 1 volume 100 scrolls

After Ānanda and Kāśyapa had shown all the volumes to the Tang Monk, they said to him, “Sage Monk, having come all this distance from the Land of the East, what sort of small gifts have you brought for us? Take them out quickly! We’ll be pleased to hand over the scriptures to you.”

On hearing this, Tripitaka said, “Because of the great distance, your disciple, Xuanzang, has not been able to make such preparation.”

“How nice! How nice!” said the two Honoured Ones, snickering, “If we imparted the scriptures to you gratis, our posterity would starve to death!”

When Pilgrim saw them fidgeting and fussing, refusing to hand over the scriptures, he could not refrain from yelling, “Master, let’s go tell Siddhartha about this! Let’s make him come himself and hand over the scriptures to old monkey!”

“Stop shouting!” said Ānanda. “Where do you think you’re that you dare indulge in such mischief and wiggery? Get over here and receive the scriptures!”

Controlling their annoyance, 8 Rules and Sand-monk managed to restrain Pilgrim before they turned to receive the books. Scroll after scroll were wrapped and laid on the horse. 4 additional luggage wraps were bundled up for 8 Rules and Sand-monk to tote after which the pilgrims went before the jewelled throne again to respect and thank Siddhartha. As they walked out the gates of the monastery, they saluted twice whenever they came upon a Religious Patriarch or a Nun. When they reached the main gate, they also saluted to take leave of the priests and nuns, the worshippers and female worshippers, before descending the mountain. There was up in the treasure loft the aged Dīpaṃkara also named a god of the Past who overheard everything and understood immediately that Ānanda and Kāśyapa had handed over scrolls of scriptures that were actually wordless to the pilgrims. Chuckling to himself, he said, “Most of the priests in the Land of the East are so stupid and blind that they’ll not recognise the value of these wordless scriptures. When that happens, won’t it have made this long trek of our sage monk completely worthless?” Then he asked, “Who’s here beside my throne?”

The White Heroic Honoured1e at once stepped forth and the aged God gave him this instruction: “You must exercise your magic powers and catch up with the Tang Monk immediately. Take away those wordless scriptures from him so that he will be forced to return for the true scriptures with words.”

Mounting a violent gust of wind, the White Heroic Honoured 1 swept out of the gate of the Thunderclap Monastery. He called up his vast magic powers. *The wind’s strong indeed! Truly a stalwart Servant of God is like no common wind-god; the wrathful cries of a mortal far surpass a young girl’s whistle! This mighty gust causes fishes and dragons to lose their lairs and angry waves in the rivers and seas. Black apes find it hard to present their fruits; yellow cranes turn around to seek their nests. The phoenix’s pure cries have lost their poems; the pheasant’s callings turn most boisterous. Green pine-branches snap; blue lotus-blossoms soar. Stalk by stalk, verdant bamboos fall; petal by petal, gold lotus quakes. Bell tones drift away to 3000 miles; the scripture recites over countless gorges fly. Beneath the cliff rare flowers’ colours fade; fresh, jade-like grasses lie down by the road. Phoenixes can’t stretch their wings; white deer hide on the ledge. Vast waves of strange fragrance now fill the world as cool, clear breezes penetrate the Heavens.* The elder Tang was walking along when he encountered this churning fragrant wind. Thinking that this was only an auspicious portent sent by the Religious Patriarch, he was completely off guard when with a loud crack in mid-air, a hand descended. The scriptures that were loaded on the horse were lifted away with no effort at all. The sight left Tripitaka yelling in terror and beating his chest while 8 Rules rolled off in pursuit on the ground and Sand-monk stood rigid to guard the empty pannier. Pilgrim Sun vaulted into the air. When that White Heroic Honoured One saw him closing in rapidly, he feared that Pilgrim’s rod might strike out blindly without regard for good or ill to cause him injury. He therefore ripped the scriptures open and threw them toward the ground. When Pilgrim saw that the scripture wrappers were torn and their contents scattered all over by the fragrant wind, he lowered the direction of his cloud to go after the books instead and stopped his pursuit. The White Heroic Honoured 1 retrieved the wind and fog and returned to report to a god of the Past. As 8 Rules sped along, he saw the holy books dropping down from the sky. Soon he was joined by Pilgrim, and the two of them gathered up the scrolls to go back to the Tang Monk. His eyes brimming with tears, the Tang Monk said, “O Disciples! We’re bullied by vicious demons even in this land of ultimate bliss!” When Sand-monk opened up a scroll of scripture that the other two disciples were clutching, his eyes perceived only snow-white paper without a trace of so much as half a letter on it. Hurriedly he presented it to Tripitaka, saying, “Master, this scroll is wordless!” Pilgrim also opened a scroll and it, too, was wordless. Then 8 Rules opened still another scroll and it was also wordless. “Open all of them!” cried Tripitaka. Every scroll had only blank paper. Heaving big sighs, the elder said, “Our people in the Land of the East simply have no luck! What good’s it to take back a wordless, empty volume like this? How’d I possibly face the Tang emperor? The crime of mocking one’s ruler’s greater than one punishable by execution!”

Already perceiving the truth of the matter, Pilgrim said to the Tang Monk, “Master, there’s no need for further talk. This has all come about because we’d no gifts for these fellows, Ānanda and Kāśyapa. That’s why we’re given these wordless texts. Let’s go back quickly to Siddhartha and charge them with fraud and solicitation for a bribe.”

“Exactly! Exactly!” yelled 8 Rules. “Let’s go and charge them!”

The 4 pilgrims turned and with painful steps, once more ascended Thunderclap. In a little while they reached the temple gates where they were met by the multitude with hands folded in their sleeves. “Has the sage monk returned to ask for an exchange of scriptures?” they asked, laughing. Tripitaka nodded his affirmation, and the Lightning Guardians permitted them to go straight inside. When they arrived before the Great Hero Hall, Pilgrim shouted, “Siddhartha, we master and disciples had to experience ten thousand stings and a thousand demons in order to come saluting from the Land of the East. After you had specifically ordered the scriptures to be given to us, Ānanda and Kāśyapa sought a bribe from us; when they didn’t succeed, they conspired in fraud and deliberately handed over wordless texts to us. Even if we took them, what good would they do? Pardon me, Siddhartha but you must deal with this matter!”

“Stop shouting!” said the Religious Patriarch with a chuckle. “I knew already that the two of them would ask you for a little present. After all, the holy scriptures are not to be given lightly, nor are they to be received gratis. Some time ago in fact a few of our sage priests went down the mountain and recited these scriptures in the house of one Elder Zhao in the Kingdom of Śrāvastī, so that the living in his family would all be protected from harm and the deceased redeemed from perdition. For all that service they managed to charge him only three pecks and three pints of rice. I told them that they had made far too cheap a sale and that their posterity would have no money to spend. Since you people came with empty hands to acquire scriptures, blank texts were handed over to you. But these blank texts are actually true, wordless scriptures, and they are just as good as those with words. However, those creatures in your Land of the East are so foolish and unenlightened that I’ve no choice but to impart to you now the texts with words.”

“Ānanda and Kāśyapa,” he then called out, “quickly select for them a few scrolls from each of the volumes of true scriptures with words, and then come back to me to report the total number.”

The two Honoured Ones again led the four pilgrims to the treasure loft where they once more demanded a gift from the Tang Monk. Since he had virtually nothing to offer, Tripitaka told Sand-monk to take out the alms-bowl of purple gold. With both hands he presented it to the Honoured Ones, saying, “Your disciple in truth has not brought with him any gift, owing to the great distance and my own poverty. This alms-bowl however, was bestowed by the Tang emperor in person, in order that I’d use it to beg for my maigre throughout the journey. As the humblest token of my gratitude, I’m presenting it to you now, and I beg the Honoured Ones to accept it. When I return to the court and make my report to the Tang emperor, a generous reward will certainly be forthcoming. Only grant us the true scriptures with words, so that His Majesty’s goodwill will not be thwarted nor the labour of this lengthy journey be wasted.” With a gentle smile, Ānanda took the alms-bowl. All those vīra who guarded the precious towers, the kitchen helpers in charge of sacrifices and incense, and the Honoured Ones who worked in the treasure loft began to clap one another on the back and tickle one another on the face. Snapping their fingers and curling their lips, every 1 of them said, “How shameless! How shameless! Asking the scripture seeker for a present!”

After a while, the two Honoured Ones became rather embarrassed, though Ānanda continued to clutch firmly at the alms-bowl. Kāśyapa however, went into the loft to select the scrolls and handed them item by item to Tripitaka. “Disciples,” said Tripitaka, “take a good look at these and make sure that they’re unlike the earlier ones.”

The 3 disciples examined each scroll as they received it and this time all the scrolls had words written on them. Altogether they were given 5048 scrolls, making up the number of a single canon. After being properly packed, the scriptures were loaded onto the horse. An additional load was made for 8 Rules to tote while their own luggage was toted by Sand-monk. As Pilgrim led the horse, the Tang Monk took up his priestly staff and gave his Vairocana hat a press and his brocade cassock a shake. In delight they once more went before our God Siddhartha. Thus it is that *sweet is the taste of the Great Pīṭaka, product most refined of Siddhartha. Note how Xuanzang has climbed the mount with pain. Pity Ānanda who has but love of gain. Their blindness removed by God of the Past, the truth now received they have peace at last – glad to bring scriptures back to the East where all may partake of this gracious feast.* Ānanda and Kāśyapa led the Tang Monk before Siddhartha who ascended the lofty lotus throne. He ordered Dragon-Tamer and Tiger-Subduer, the 2 Arhats, to strike up the cloudy stone-chime to assemble all the divinities including the 3000 gods, the 3000 guardians, the 8 Lightning Guardians, the 500 Arhats, the 800 nuns and priests, the male and female worshippers, the Honoured 1s from every Heaven and cave-dwelling from every blessed land and spirit mountain. Those who ought to be seated were asked to ascend their treasure thrones while those who should stand were told to make 2 columns on both sides. In a moment celestial poems filled the air as layers of auspicious luminosity and hallowed mist loomed up in the sky. After all the gods had assembled, they saluted to greet Siddhartha. Then Siddhartha asked, “Ānanda and Kāśyapa, how many scrolls of scriptures you’ve passed on to him? Give me an itemised report.”

The 2 Honoured 1s said, “We’ve turned over to the Tang court the following scrolls of Threads:

- 1. The Extinguishment 400
- 2. The Ākāśagarbha-Nun-religious 20
- 3. The Gracious Will, Major Collection 40
- 4. The Prajñāpāramitā-saṃkaya verse 20
- 5. The Homage to Bhūtatathātā 20
- 6. The Anakṣara-granthaka-rocana-garbha 50
- 7. The Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa 30
- 8. The Lightningcchedika-prajñāpāramitā 1 scroll
- 9. A god-carita-kāvya 116
- 10. The Nun-pīṭaka 360
- 11. The Sūraṅgama-Fixity 30
- 12. The Arhavinīścaya-religionpariyāya 40
- 13. The Avataṃsaka 81
- 14. The Mahāprajñā-pāramitā 600
- 15. The Abūta-religion 550
- 16. The Other Mādhyamika 42
- 17. The Kāśyapa-parivarta 20
- 18. The Pañca-Serpent 20
- 19. The Nun-caryā-nirdeśa 60
- 20. The Magadha 140
- 21. The Māyā-dālamahātantra mahāyāna-gambhīra nāyaguhyā-paraśi 60
- 22. The Western Heaven Treatise 30

- 23. A god-kṣetra 1,638
- 24. The Mahāprajñāpāramitā Treatise 90
- 25. The Original Loft 56
- 26. The Mahāmayūri-vidyārājñī 14
- 27. The Abhireligion-koṣa Treatise 10
- 28. The Mahāsaṃghaṭa 30
- 29. The Sadreligion-puṇḍarika 10
- 30. The Precious Permanence 170
- 31. The Sāṅghika-vinaya no
- 32. The Mahāyāna-śraddhotpāda Treatise 50
- 33. The Precious Authority 140
- 34. The Correct Commandment 10
- 35. The Vidyā-mātra-siddhi Treatise 10

From the thirty-five volumes of scriptures that are in the treasury, we've selected altogether five thousand and forty-eight scrolls<sup>9</sup> for the sage monk to take back to the Tang in the Land of the East. Most of these've been properly packed, loaded on the horse, and a few have also been arranged in a pannier. The pilgrims now wish to express their thanks to you."

Having tethered the horse and set down the poles, Tripitaka led his 3 disciples to bow to God, each pressing his palms together in front of him. Siddhartha said to the Tang Monk, "The efficacy of these scriptures can't be measured. Not only are they the mirror of our faith but they are also the source of the Three Religions. They mustn't be lightly handled, especially when you return to your South Jambūdvīpa Continent and display them to the multitude. No one should open a scroll without fasting and bathing first. Treasure them! Honour them! Therein will be found the mysteries of gaining mortality and comprehending the Way, the wondrous formulas for the execution of ten thousand transformations."

Tripitaka respected to thank him and to express his faith and obedience. As before, he saluted himself in homage three times to the Religious Patriarch with all earnestness and sincerity before he took the scriptures and left. As he went through the three monastery gates, he again thanked each of the sages. After he had sent away the Tang Monk, Siddhartha dismissed the assembly for the transmission of scriptures. From one side stepped forth the Nun Guanshiyin who pressed her palms together to say to the Religious Patriarch, "This disciple received your golden decree that year to search for someone in the Land of the East to be a scripture seeker. Today he has succeeded. Altogether, his journey took fourteen years, or five thousand and forty days. Eight more days and the perfect canonical number will be attained. Would you permit me to surrender in return your golden decree?"

Highly pleased, Siddhartha said, "What you said is most appropriate. You're certainly permitted to surrender my golden decree." He then gave this instruction to the Eight Lightning Guardians: "Quickly exercise your magic powers to lift the sage monk back to the East. As soon as he has imparted the true scriptures to the people there, bring him back here to the West. You must accomplish all this within eight days, so as to fulfil the perfect canonical number of five thousand and forty-eight. Do not delay." The Lightning Guardians at once caught up with the Tang Monk, crying, "Scripture seekers, follow us!" The Tang Monk and his companions, all with healthy frames and buoyant bodies, followed the Lightning Guardians to rise in the air astride the clouds. Truly *their minds enlightened, they saluted to God; merit perfected, they ascended on high.*

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9 times 9 ends the count & Killing's all destroyed; the work of 3 times 3' done, the Dao reverts to its root

We'll not speak of the 8 Lightning Guardians escorting the Tang Monk back to his nation. We turn instead to those Guardians of the 5 Quarters, the 4 Sentinels, the 6 Gods of Darkness and the 6 Gods of Light, and the Guardians of Monasteries who appeared before the triple gates and said to the Nun Guanyin, "Your disciples had received the Nun's religion decree to give secret protection to the sage monk. Now that the work of the sage monk's completed and the Nun's returned the Religious Patriarch's golden decree to him, we too request permission from the Nun to return your religion decree to you."

Highly pleased also, the Nun said, "Yes, yes! You've my permission."

Then she asked, "What's the disposition of the four pilgrims during their journey?"

"They showed genuine devotion and determination," replied the various deities, "that'd hardly have escaped the penetrating observation of the Nun. The Tang Monk after all had endured unspeakable sufferings. Indeed, all the ordeals that he'd to undergo throughout his journey have been recorded by your disciples. Here's the complete account." The Nun started to read the registry from its beginning and this was the content: "The Guardians in obedience to your decree record with care the Tang Monk's calamities.

- Gold Cicada banished is the first ordeal [8];<sup>2</sup>
- Being almost killed after birth is the second ordeal [9];
- Being thrown in the river hardly a month old is the third ordeal [9];
- Seeking parents and their vengeance is the fourth ordeal [9];
- Meeting a tiger after leaving the city is the fifth ordeal [13];
- Falling into a pit and losing followers is the sixth ordeal [13];
- The Double-Fork Ridge is the seventh ordeal [13];
- The Mountain of Two Frontiers is the eighth ordeal [13];
- Changing horse at a steep brook is the ninth ordeal [15];
- Burning by fire at night is the tenth ordeal [16];
- Losing the cassock is the eleventh ordeal [16];
- Bringing 8 Rules to submission is the twelfth ordeal [18–19];
- Being blocked by the Yellow Wind Fiend is the thirteenth ordeal [20];
- Seeking aid with Lingji is the fourteenth ordeal [21];
- Hard to cross Flowing-Sand is the fifteenth ordeal [22];
- Taking in Sand-monk is the sixteenth ordeal [22];
- The Four Sages' epiphany is the seventeenth ordeal [23];
- The Five Villages Temple is the eighteenth ordeal [24];
- The ginseng hard to revive is the nineteenth ordeal [26];
- Banishing the Mind Monkey is the twentieth ordeal [27];
- Getting lost at Black Pine Forest is the twenty-first ordeal [28];
- Sending a letter to Precious Image Kingdom is the twenty-second ordeal [29];
- Changing into a tiger at the Golden Chimes Hall is the twenty-third ordeal [30];
- Meeting demons at Level-Top Mountain is the twenty-fourth ordeal [32];
- Being hung high at Lotus-Flower Cave is the twenty-fifth ordeal [33];
- Saving the ruler of Black Rooster Kingdom is the twenty-sixth ordeal [37];
- Running into a demon's transformed body is the twenty-seventh ordeal [37];
- Meeting a fiend in Roaring Mountain is the twenty-eighth ordeal [40];
- The sage monk abducted by wind is the twenty-ninth ordeal [40];
- The Mind Monkey being injured is the thirtieth ordeal [41];
- Asking the sage to subdue monsters is the thirty-first ordeal [42];
- Sinking in the Black River is the thirty-second ordeal [43];
- Hauling at Cart Slow Kingdom is the thirty-third ordeal [44];
- A mighty contest is the thirty-fourth ordeal [chaps. 45–46];
- Expelling Daoists to prosper Religious is the thirty-fifth ordeal [47];
- Meeting a great water on the road is the thirty-sixth ordeal [47];
- Falling into the Heaven-Reaching River is the thirty-seventh ordeal [48];
- The Fish-Basket revealing her body is the thirty-eighth ordeal [49];
- Meeting a fiend at Golden Helmet Mountain is the thirty-ninth ordeal [50];
- Heaven's gods find it hard to win is the fortieth ordeal [chaps. 51–52];
- Asking a god for the source is the forty-first ordeal [52];
- Being poisoned after drinking water is the forty-second ordeal [53];
- Detained for marriage at Western Liang Kingdom is the forty-third ordeal [54];
- Suffering at the Cave of the Lute is the forty-fourth ordeal [55];
- Banishing again the Mind Monkey is the forty-fifth ordeal [56];
- The macaque hard to distinguish is the forty-sixth ordeal [chaps. 57–58];
- The road blocked at the Mountain of Flames is the forty-seventh ordeal [59];
- Seeking the palm-leaf fan is the forty-eighth ordeal [chaps. 59–60];
- Binding the demon king is the forty-ninth ordeal [61];
- Sweeping the pagoda at Sacrifice Kingdom is the fiftieth ordeal [62];
- Recovering the treasure to save the monks is the fifty-first ordeal [63];
- Reciting poetry at the Brambled Forest is the fifty-second ordeal [64];
- Meeting disaster at Little Thunderclap is the fifty-third ordeal [65];
- The celestial gods being imprisoned is the fifty-fourth ordeal [66];
- Being blocked by filth at Pulpy Persimmon Alley is the fifty-fifth ordeal [67];
- Applying medication at the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom is the fifty-sixth ordeal [68–69];
- Healing fatigue and infirmity is the fifty-seventh ordeal [68–69];
- Subduing monster to recover a queen is the fifty-eighth ordeal [69–71];
- Delusion by the seven passions is the fifty-ninth ordeal [72];
- Being wounded by Many Eyes is the sixtieth ordeal [73];
- The way blocked at the Lion-Camel Kingdom is the sixty-first ordeal [74–75];
- The fiends divided into three colours is the sixty-second ordeal [74–77];
- Meeting calamity in the city is the sixty-third ordeal [76–77];
- Requesting God to subdue the demons is the sixty-fourth ordeal [77];

Rescuing the lads at Beggar is the sixty-fifth ordeal [78];  
Distinguishing the true from the deviate is the sixty-sixth ordeal [79];  
Saving a fiend at a pine forest is the sixty-seventh ordeal [80];  
Falling sick in a priestly chamber is the sixty-eighth ordeal [81];  
Being imprisoned at the Bottomless Cave is the sixty-ninth ordeal [81–83];  
Difficulty in going through Religion-Destroying Kingdom is the seventieth ordeal [84];  
Meeting demons at Mist-Concealing Mountain is the seventy-first ordeal [85–86];  
Seeking rain at Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture is the seventy-second ordeal [87];  
Losing their weapons is the seventy-third ordeal [88];  
The festival of the rake is the seventy-fourth ordeal [89];  
Meeting disaster at Bamboo-Knot Mountain is the seventy-fifth ordeal [90];  
Suffering at Mysterious Flower Cave is the seventy-sixth ordeal [91];  
Capturing the rhinoceroses is the seventy-seventh ordeal [92];  
Being forced to marry at India is the seventy-eighth ordeal [chaps. [93–95];  
Jailed at Bronze Estrada Prefecture is the seventy-ninth ordeal [97];  
Delivered of mortal stock at Cloud-Transcending Ferry is the eightieth ordeal [98];  
The journey: 108000 miles. The sage monk's ordeals are clearly on file.

After the Nun had read through the entire registry of ordeals, she said hurriedly, "Within our gate of Religion, nine times nine's the crucial means by which one returns to perfection. The sage monk's undergone eighty ordeals. Because one ordeal's therefore, still lacking, the sacred number isn't yet complete." At once she gave this order to 1 of the Guardians: "Catch the Lightning Guardians and create one more ordeal."

Having received this command, the Guardian soared toward the east astride the clouds. After a night and a day he caught the Lightning Guardians and whispered in their ears, "Do this and this...! Don't fail to obey the religion decree of the Nun."

On hearing these words, the 8 Lightning Guardians immediately retrieved the wind that had borne aloft the four pilgrims, dropping them and the horse bearing the scriptures to the ground. *Alas! Truly such is nine times nine, hard task of mortality! Firmness of will yields the mysterious key. By bitter toil you must the demons spurn; cultivation will the proper way return. Regard not the scriptures as easy things. So many are the sage monk's sufferings! Learn of the old, wondrous Kinship of the 3: 'elixir won't gel if there's slight errancy.* When his feet touched profane ground, Tripitaka became terribly frightened. 8 Rules however, roared with laughter, saying, "Good! Good! Good! This is exactly a case of 'More haste, less speed!'"

"Good! Good! Good!" said Sand-monk. "Because we've speeded up too much, they want us to take a little rest here."

"Have no worry," said the Great Sage. "As the proverb says, *for ten days you sit on the shore; in one day you may pass nine beaches.*"

"Stop matching your wits, you three!" said Tripitaka. "Let's see if we can tell where we're." Looking all around, Sand-monk said, "I know the place! I know the place! Master, listen to the sound of water!" Pilgrim said, "The sound of water, I suppose, reminds you of your ancestral home."

"Which is the Flowing-Sand River," said 8 Rules. "No! No!" said Sand-monk. "This happens to be the Heaven-Reaching River." Tripitaka said, "O Disciples! Take a careful look and see which side of the river we're on."

Vaulting into the air, Pilgrim shielded his eyes with his hand and took a careful survey of the place before dropping down once more. "Master," he said, "this is the west bank of the Heaven-Reaching River."

"Now I remember,"<sup>4</sup> said Tripitaka. "There was a Chen Village on the east bank. When we arrived here that year, you rescued their son and daughter. In their gratitude to us, they wanted to make a boat to take us across. Eventually we're fortunate enough to get across on the back of a white turtle. I recall, too, that there was no human habitation whatever on the west bank. What shall we do this time?"

"I thought that only profane people would practice this sort of fraud," said 8 Rules. "Now I know that even the Lightning Guardians before the face of God can practice fraud! God commanded them to take us back east. How could they just abandon us in mid-journey? Now we're in quite a bind! How are we going to get across?"

"Stop grumbling, Second Elder Brother!" said Sand-monk. "Our master has already attained the Way, for he had already been delivered from his mortal frame previously at the Cloud-Transcending Ferry. This time he can't possibly sink in water. Let's all of us exercise our magic of Displacement and take Master across."

"You can't take him over! You can't take him over!" said Pilgrim, chuckling to himself. Now, why did he say that? If he were willing to exercise his magic powers and reveal the mystery of flight, master and disciples could cross even a thousand rivers. He knew however, that the Tang Monk had not yet perfected the sacred number of nine times nine. That one remaining ordeal made it necessary for them to be detained at the spot.

As master and disciples conversed and walked slowly up to the edge of the water, they suddenly heard someone calling, "Tang Sage Monk! Tang Sage Monk! Come this way! Come this way!" Startled, the four of them looked all around but could not see any sign of a human being or a boat. Then they caught sight of a huge, white, scabby-headed turtle at the shoreline. "Old Master," he cried with outstretched neck, "I've waited for you for so many years! Have you returned only at this time?"

"Old Turtle," replied Pilgrim, smiling, "we troubled you in a year past and today we meet again." Tripitaka, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk could not have been more pleased. "If indeed you want to serve us," said Pilgrim, "come up on the shore." The turtle crawled up the bank. Pilgrim told his companions to guide the horse onto the turtle's back. As before, 8 Rules squatted at the rear of the horse while the Tang Monk and Sand-monk took up positions to the left and to the right of the horse. With one foot on the turtle's head and another on his neck, Pilgrim said, "Old Turtle, go steadily."

His 4 legs outstretched, the old turtle moved through the water as if he were on dry level ground carrying all 5 of them – master, disciples, and the horse – straight toward the eastern shore. Thus it is that *in Advaya's*<sup>5</sup> *gate will Religion profound reveal Heaven and Earth and demons confound. The original visage now they see; causes find perfection in 1 body. Freely they move when Triyāna's won and when the elixir's nine turns are done. The luggage and the staff there's no need to tote, glad to return on old turtle afloat.* Carrying the pilgrims on his back, the old turtle trod on the waves and proceeded for more than half a day. Late in the afternoon they were near the eastern shore when he suddenly asked this question: "Old Master, in that year when I took you across, I begged you to question Siddhartha, once you got to see him when I'd find my sought-after refuge and how much longer I'd live. Did you do that?"

Now that elder since his arrival at the Western Heaven had been preoccupied with bathing in the Jade Perfection Abbey, being renewed at Cloud-Transcending Ferry, and saluting the various sage monks, Nuns, and Gods. When he walked up the Spirit Mountain, he fixed his thought on the worship of God and on the acquisition of scriptures, completely banishing from his mind all other concerns. He did not, of course, ask about the allotted age of the old turtle. Not daring to lie however, he fell silent and did not answer the question for a long time. Perceiving that Tripitaka had not asked a god for him, the old turtle shook his body once and dove with a splash into the depths. The 4 pilgrims, the horse, and the scriptures all fell into the water as well. *Ah!* It was fortunate that the Tang Monk had cast off his mortal frame and attained the Way. If he were like the person he had been before, he would have sunk straight to the bottom. The white horse moreover was originally a dragon while 8 Rules and Sand-monk both were quite at home in the water. Smiling broadly, Pilgrim made a great display of his magic powers by hauling the Tang Monk right out of the water and onto the eastern shore. But the scriptures, the clothing, and the saddle were completely soaked. Master and disciples had just climbed up the riverbank when suddenly a violent gale arose; the sky darkened immediately and both thunder and lightning began as rocks and grit flew everywhere. What they felt was *1 gust of wind and the whole world teetered; 1 clap of thunder and both mountains and streams shuddered. 1 flash of lightning shot flames through the clouds; 1 sky of fog enveloped this great Earth. The wind's mighty howl; the thunder's violent roar; the lightning's scarlet streaks; the fog blanking moon and stars. The wind hurtled dust and dirt at their faces; the thunder sent tigers and leopards into hiding; the lightning raised among the fowl a ruckus; the fog made the woods and trees disappear. That wind caused waves in the Heaven-Reaching River to toss and churn; that lightning lit up the Heaven-Reaching River down to its bottom; that thunder terrified the Heaven-Reaching River's dragons and fishes; that fog covered the shores of Heaven-Reaching River with a shroud of darkness. Marvellous wind! Mountains cracked as pines and bamboos toppled. Marvellous thunder! Its power stirred insects and injured humans. Marvellous lightning! Like a gold snake it brightened both land and sky. Marvellous fog! It surged through the air to screen the 9-fold Heaven.* So terrified were the pilgrims that Tripitaka held firmly to the scripture wraps and Sand-monk threw himself on the poles. While 8 Rules clung to the white horse, Pilgrim wielded his iron rod with both hands to give protection left and right. That wind, fog, thunder, and lightning had been a storm brought on by invisible demons who wanted to snatch away the scriptures the pilgrims had acquired. The commotion lasted all night, and only by morning did the storm subside. Soaked from top to bottom and shaking all over, the elder said, "Wukong, how did this storm come about?"

"Master, you don't seem to understand," said Pilgrim panting heavily, "that when we escorted you to acquire these scriptures, we'd in fact robbed Heaven and Earth of their creative powers. For our success meant that we'd share the age of the universe; like the light of the sun and moon, we'd enjoy life everlasting for we'd put on an incorruptible body. Our success however, had also incurred the envy of Heaven and Earth, the jealousy of both demons and gods who wanted to snatch away the scriptures from us. They'd not do so only because the scriptures were thoroughly wet and because they'd been shielded by your rectified religion-body that could not be harmed by thunder, lightning, or fog. Moreover, old monkey's brandishing his iron rod to exercise the nature of pure yang and give you protection. Now that it's morning, the forces of yang are evermore in ascendancy and the demons can't prevail."

Only then did Tripitaka, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk realise what had taken place, and they all thanked Pilgrim repeatedly. In a little while, the sun was way up in the sky; they moved the scriptures to high ground so that the wraps could be opened and their contents dried. To this day the boulders have remained on which the scriptures were spread out and sunned. By the side of the boulders they also spread out their own clothing and shoes. As they stood, sat, or jumped about, truly this was their situation: *the 1 pure yang body facing the light has put invisible demons all to flight. Know that true scriptures will over water prevail. They fear not the thunder-and-lightning assail. Henceforth to Sam-Awakening they will go in peace and to fairy land they will return with ease. Rocks for sunning scriptures are still found here though no demon would ever dare come near.* The 4 of them were examining the scriptures scroll by scroll to see if they had completely dried when some anglers arrived at the shore. When they saw the pilgrims, 1 of the anglers recognised them and said, "Old Masters, aren't you the ones who crossed this river some years ago on your way to the Western Heaven to seek scriptures?"

"Indeed, we're!" replied 8 Rules. "Where are you from? How is it that you recognise us?"

"We're from the Chen Village," said the angler. "How far is the village from here?" asked 8 Rules. The angler said, "Due south of this canal, about twenty miles."

"Master," said 8 Rules, "let's move the scriptures to the Chen Village and dry them there. They have a place for us to sit and food for us to eat. We can even ask their family to starch our clothing. Isn't that better than staying here?"

"Let's not go there," replied Tripitaka. "As soon as the scriptures are dried here, we can collect them and be on our way."

The anglers however, went back south of the canal and ran right into Chen Cheng. "Number Two," they cried, "the masters who offered themselves as sacrifice-substitutes for your children years ago have returned."

"Where did you see them?" asked Chen Cheng. Pointing with their hands, the anglers said, "Near the boulders over there where they're sunning scrolls of scriptures."

Chen Cheng took some of his farmhands and ran past the canal. When he caught sight of the pilgrims, he hurriedly went to his knees and said, "Venerable Dads, now that you've returned, having accomplished your work and merit of acquiring scriptures, why you not came straight to our home? Why are you loitering here instead? Please, please come to our home!"

"Wait till we've dried the scriptures in the sun," said Pilgrim, "and we'll go with you."

"How is it," asked Chen Cheng again, "that the clothing and scriptures of the venerable dads are soaking wet?"

"In that previous year," replied Tripitaka, "we're indebted to a white turtle for taking us on his back to the western shore. This time he again offered to carry us back to the eastern shore. When we're about to reach the bank, he asked me whether I'd remembered to inquire of God for him about how much longer it would take for him to achieve human form. I'd actually forgotten about the matter, and he dove into the water. That was how we got wet."

After Tripitaka had thus given a thorough account of what had taken place, Chen Cheng respected and urged them to go back to the house. At length Tripitaka gave in, and they began to collect the scriptures together. They did not expect however, that several scrolls of the Poem of the Deeds of *God Thread* would be stuck to the rocks and a part of the *Thread's* ending was torn off. This is why the *Thread* today is not a complete text, and the top of that particular boulder on which the *Thread* had dried still retains some traces of writing. "We've been very careless!" said Tripitaka sorrowfully.

"We'd have been more vigilant."

"Hardly! Hardly!" said Pilgrim, laughing. "After all, even Heaven and Earth are not perfect. This *Thread* may have been perfect but a part of it has been torn off precisely because only in that condition will it correspond to the profound mystery of non-perfection. What happened isn't something human power could anticipate or change!" After master and disciples had finished packing up the scriptures,



they headed for the village with Chen Cheng. The news of the pilgrims' arrival was passed from 1 person to 10, 10 to 100, and 100 to 1000 till all the people, old and young came to receive them. When Chen Qing got the news, he immediately set up an incense altar in front of his door and called for drummers and poets to play. The moment they arrived, Chen led his entire household to respect to the pilgrims so as to thank them once more for their previous kindness of saving their children. Then he ordered tea and maigre for them. Since Tripitaka had partaken of the mortal victuals prepared for him by the Religious Patriarch, and since he had been delivered from his mortal frame to become a god, he had no desire at all for profane food. The 2 old men begged, begged, and only to please them did he pick up the merest morsel. The Great Sage Sun who never ate much cooked food anyway, said almost immediately, "Enough!" Sand-monk did not show much appetite either. As for 8 Rules, even he did not resemble his former self, for he soon put down his bowl. "Idiot, aren't you eating anymore?" asked Pilgrim.

"I don't know why," said 8 Rules, "but my stomach seems to have weakened all at once!"

They therefore put away the food and the 2 old men asked about the enterprise of scripture seeking. Tripitaka gave a thorough account of how they bathed at the Jade Perfection Abbey first, how their bodies turned light and agile at the Cloud-Transcending Ferry, how they saluted to Siddhartha at Thunderclap, and how they were feted beneath the precious tower and received scriptures at the treasure loft. He then went on to tell how the 2 Honoured 1s, failing to obtain a gift at first, gave them wordless scriptures instead, how the second audience with Siddhartha had resulted in acquiring a canonical sum of scriptures, how the white turtle dove into the water, and how invisible demons tried to rob them. After this detailed rehearsal, he immediately wanted to leave. The entire household of the two old men, of course, absolutely refused to let them go. "We'd never have repaid," they said, "your profound kindness in saving the lives of our son and daughter except by building a temple to your memory. We've named it the Life-Saving Monastery so that we might offer you the perpetual sacrifice of incense."

Then they called Chen Guanbao and One Load of Gold, the son and daughter for whom Pilgrim and 8 Rules originally served as substitutes on that occasion of child-sacrifice, to come out to respect again to their benefactors before they invited the pilgrims to view the monastery. Leaving the scripture-wraps in front of their family hall, Tripitaka recited a scroll of the *Precious Permanence Thread* for their entire household. When they reached the monastery, food had already been laid out there by the Chen family. Hardly had they been seated than another banquet was sent in by another family. Before they could even raise their chopsticks, still another banquet was brought in. There seemed in fact to be an unending stream of visitors and food vying for the pilgrims' attention. Not wishing to decline such sincere display of the people's hospitality, Tripitaka forced himself to make some show of tasting what was set before him. That monastery was a handsome building indeed by the way. *The temple's bright red-painted doors reflect the work of all donors. From that moment one edifice would rise with 2 porticoes adding to its size. Screens and casements scarlet; 7 treasures exquisite. Incense and clouds interlace as pure light floods the airy space. A few young cypresses need water still: pines have yet to form clusters on the hill. A living stream in front reaches Heaven with its tossing billows; a tall ridge behind, the mountain range through which the earth pulse flows.* After he had looked at the monastery from the outside, Tripitaka then went up to the tall tower where he found the four statues of himself and his disciples. When 8 Rules saw these, he gave Pilgrim a tug and said, "Your statue looks very much like you!"

"Second Elder Brother," said Sand-monk, "yours has great resemblance, too. But Master's seems to look even more handsome."

"It's about right! It's about right!" said Tripitaka, and they descended the tower. In the front hall and the rear corridor, more vegetarian dishes were laid out for them.

Pilgrim asked the Chens, "Whatever happened to the shrine of that Great King?"

"It was pulled down that very year," replied the two old men. "Since this monastery was built, Venerable Dad, we've been enjoying a rich harvest every year. This has to be the blessing you bestowed on us."

"It's actually the gift of Heaven!" said Pilgrim, chucking. "We've nothing to do with it. But after we leave this time, we'll try to give you all the protection we can, so that the families of your entire village may enjoy abundant posterity, the peaceful births of the six beasts, and annually wind and rain in due season." All the people respected again to express their thanks.

Before and behind the monastery, there seemed to have gathered a numberless crowd all wanting to offer fruits and meagre to their benefactors. With a giggle 8 Rules said, "It's just my lousy luck! At the time when I'd eat, there wasn't a single household that would give me ten meals. Today I've no appetite but one family after another is pressing me with invitations." Though he felt stuffed, he raised his hands slightly and once more devoured eight or nine platters of vegetarian food. Though he claimed his stomach had weakened, he nonetheless put away twenty or thirty buns. The pilgrims all ate to their fullest capacity but still there were other households waiting to invite them. "What contribution have these disciples made," said Tripitaka, "that we'd receive such great outpouring of your affection? I beg you all to call a halt tonight. Wait till tomorrow and we'll be glad to be the recipients again."

It was already deep in the night. As he wanted to guard the true scriptures, Tripitaka dared not leave. He remained seated below the tower and meditated, so as to watch his possessions. By about the hour of the third watch, Tripitaka whispered, "Wukong, the people here have already perceived that we've finished our enterprise and attained the Way. As the ancients put it, *the adept doesn't show himself; he who shows himself is no adept*. If they detain us too long, I fear that we may lose out in our main enterprise."

"What you say is quite right, Master," replied Pilgrim. "While it is still deep in the night and people are all sound asleep, let us leave quietly."

8 Rules now had become quite alert and Sand-monk was most understanding. Even the white horse seemed to know their thoughts. They all arose, silently loaded the packs on the saddle, took up the poles, and toted their belongings through the corridor. When they reached the monastery gate, they found it padlocked. Using his magic, Pilgrim opened the locks on both the second-level gate and the main gate. As they were searching for the way toward the East, a voice rang out in mid-air. "You who're fleeing," cried the Eight Lightning Guardians, "follow us!" As the elder smelled a strange fragrance, he rose with the others into the wind. Truly *elixir formed, he knows the original face; his healthy frame, natural and free, salutes his lord*.

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**They return to the Land of the East; 5 sages become perfected**

The 4 pilgrims departed by mounting the wind with the Lightning Guardians. The multitude in the Life-Saving Monastery at the Chen Village rose at dawn and went at once to offer fruits and other food to their benefactors. When they arrived at the space beneath the tower however, they found that the Tang Monk had disappeared. Thereupon all of them hunted everywhere but without success. They were so upset that they did not quite know what to do except to wail aloud, "We've allowed a living god to walk away!"

After a while, the entire household realised that they had no better alternative than to pile all the food and gifts on the altar up in the tower and offer them as sacrifices along with the burning of paper cash. Thereafter they made four great sacrifices and twenty-four smaller ones each year. Moreover, those who wanted to pray for healing, for safety on a journey, for the gift of a spouse, for wealth or children, and to make a vow appeared daily at every hour to present their offerings and incense. Truly, *the gold-censer continued a millennium's fire; the jade-chalice brightened with an eternal lamp*. The 8 Lightning Guardians employed the second gust of fragrant wind to carry the 4 pilgrims back to the Land of the East. In less than a day, the capital, Chang'an, gradually came into view. That Emperor Taizong had escorted the Tang Monk out of the city 3 days before the full moon in the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the Zhenguan reign period. By the 16<sup>th</sup> year, he had already asked the Bureau of Labour to erect a Scripture-Watch Tower outside the Western-Peace Pass to receive the holy books. Each year Taizong would go personally to that place for a visit. It so happened that he had gone again to the tower that day when he caught sight of a sky full of auspicious mists drifting near from the West, and he noticed at the same time strong gusts of fragrant wind. Halting in mid-air, the Lightning Guardians cried, "Sage Monk, this is the city Chang'an. It's not convenient for us to go down there for the people of this region are quite intelligent and our true identity may become known to them. Even the Great Sage Sun and his two companions needn't go; you yourself may go, hand over the scriptures, and return at once. We'll wait for you in the air so that we may all go back to report to God."

"What the Honoured Ones say may be most appropriate," said the great sage, "but how'd my master tote all those scriptures? How'd he lead the horse at the same time? We'll have to escort him down there. May we trouble you to wait a while in the air? We daren't tarry."

"When the Nun Guanyin spoke to Siddhartha the other day," said the Lightning Guardians, "she assured him that the whole trip should take only eight days, so that the canonical number would be fulfilled. It's already more than four days now. We fear that 8 Rules might become so enamoured of the riches down below that we'll be unable to meet our appointed schedule."

"When Master attains Godhood," said 8 Rules, chuckling, "I, too, will attain Godhood. How could I become enamoured of riches down below? Stupid old ruffians! Wait for me here, all of you! As soon as we've handed over the scriptures, I'll return with you and be canonized."

Idiot took up the pole, Sand-monk led the horse, and Pilgrim supported the sage monk. Lowering their cloud, they dropped down beside the Scripture-Watchtower. When Taizong and his officials saw them, they all descended the tower to receive them. "Has the royal brother returned?" asked the emperor. The Tang Monk immediately saluted himself but he was raised by the emperor's own hands.

"Who are these three persons?" asked the emperor once more.

"They are my disciples made during our journey," replied the Tang Monk. Highly pleased, Taizong at once ordered his attendants, "Saddle one of our chariot horses for our royal brother to ride. We'll go back to the court together."

The Tang Monk thanked him and mounted the horse, closely followed by the Great Sage wielding his golden-hooped rod and by 8 Rules and Sand-monk toting the luggage and supporting the other horse. The entire entourage thus entered together the city of Chang'an. Truly *a banquet of peace was held years ago. When lords, civil and martial, made a grand show. A priest preached the law in a great event; from Golden chimes the king his subject sent. Tripitaka was given a royal rescript for 5 Phases matched the cause of holy script. Through bitter smelting all demons were purged. Merit done, they now on the court converged.* The Tang Monk and his three disciples followed the throne into the court and soon there was not a single person in the city of Chang'an who had not learned of the scripture seekers' return. The Temple of Great Blessing was also the old residence of the Tang Monk in Chang'an. That day the young and old priests suddenly discovered that the branches of a few pine trees within the temple gate were pointing eastward. Astonished, they cried, "Strange! Strange! There's no strong wind to speak of last night. Why're all the tops of these trees twisted in this manner?"

One of the former disciples of Tripitaka said, "Quickly, let's get our proper clerical garb. The old master who went away to acquire scriptures must have returned."

"How do you know that?" asked the other priests.

"At the time of his departure," the old disciple said, "he made the remark that he might be away for two or three years, or for six or seven years. Whenever we noticed that these pine-tree tops were pointing to the east, it would mean that he has returned. Since my master spoke the holy words of a true God, I know that the truth has been confirmed this day."

They put on their clothing hurriedly and left; by the time they reached the street to the west, people were already saying that the scripture seeker had just arrived and been received into the city by His Majesty. When they heard the news, the various monks dashed forward and ran right into the imperial chariot. Not daring to approach the emperor, they followed the entourage instead to the gate of the court. The Tang Monk dismounted and entered the court with the emperor. The dragon horse, the scripture packs, Pilgrim, 8 Rules, and Sand-monk were all placed beneath the steps of jade while Taizong commanded the royal brother to ascend the hall and take a seat.

After thanking the emperor and taking his seat, the Tang Monk asked that the scripture scrolls be brought up. Pilgrim and his companions handed them over to the imperial attendants who presented them in turn to the emperor for inspection. "How many scrolls of scriptures are there," asked Taizong, "and how did you acquire them?"

"When your subject arrived at the Spirit Mountain and saluted to the Religious Patriarch," replied Tripitaka, "he was kind enough to ask Ānanda and Kāśyapa, the two Honoured Ones, to lead us to the precious tower first for a meal. Then we're brought to the treasure loft where the scriptures were bestowed on us. Those Honoured Ones asked for a gift but we're not prepared and did not give them any. They gave us some scriptures anyway, and after thanking the Religious Patriarch, we headed east but a monstrous wind snatched away the scriptures. My humble disciple fortunately had a little magic power; he gave chase at once, and the scriptures were thrown and scattered all over. When we unrolled the scrolls, we saw that they were all wordless, blank texts. Your subjects in great fear went again to bow and plead before God. The Religious Patriarch said, 'When these scriptures were created, some Beggar sage monks left the monastery and recited some scrolls for one Elder Zhao in the Srāvastī Kingdom. As a result, the living members of that family were granted safety and protection while the deceased attained redemption. For such great service they only managed to ask the elder for three pecks and three pints of rice and a little gold. I told them that it was too cheap a sale, and that their descendants would have no money to spend.' Since we learned that even the Religious Patriarch anticipated that the two Honoured Ones would demand a gift, we'd little choice but to offer them that alms-bowl of purple gold that Your Majesty had bestowed on me. Only then did they willingly turn over the true scriptures with writing to us. There're thirty-five titles of these scriptures and several scrolls were selected from each title. Altogether there're now five thousand and forty-eight scrolls, the number of which makes up one canonical sum."

More delighted than ever, Taizong gave this command: "Let the Court of Imperial Entertainments prepare a banquet in the East Hall so that we may thank our royal brother." Then he happened to notice Tripitaka's three disciples standing beneath the steps, all with extraordinary looks, and he therefore asked, "Are your noble disciples foreigners?"

Saluting himself, the elder said, "My eldest disciple has the surname of Sun, and his religious name is Wukong. Your subject also addresses him as Pilgrim Sun. He comes from the Water Curtain Cave of the Flower-Fruit Mountain, located in the Aolai Country in the East East-Videha Continent. Because he caused great disturbance in the Celestial Palace, he was imprisoned in a stone box by the Religious Patriarch and pressed beneath the Mountain of Two Frontiers in the region of the Western barbarians. Thanks to the admonitions of the Nun Guanyin, he was converted to Religion and became my disciple when I freed him. Throughout my journey I relied heavily on his protection.

"My second disciple has the surname of Bullseye, and his religious name is Aware of Ability. Your subject also addresses him as Bullseye 8 Rules. He comes from the Cloudy Paths Cave of Fulling Mountain. He was playing the fiend at the Old Gao Village of Qoco when the admonitions of the Nun and the power of the Pilgrim caused him to become my disciple. He made his merit on our journey

by toting the luggage and helping us to ford the waters. "My third disciple has the surname of Sha, and his religious name's Awakened to Purity. Your subject also addresses him as Sand-monk. Originally he was a fiend at the Flowing-Sand River. Again the admonitions of the Nun persuaded him to take the vows of Religion. By the way, the horse is not the one my Lord bestowed on me."

Taizong said, "The colour and the coat seem all the same. Why isn't it the same horse?"

"When your subject reached the Eagle Grief Stream in the Serpent Coil Mountain and tried to cross it," replied Tripitaka, "the original horse was devoured by this horse. Pilgrim managed to learn from the Nun that this horse was originally the prince of the Dragon King of the Western Ocean. Convicted of a crime, he would have been executed had it not been for the intervention of the Nun who ordered him to be the steed of your subject. It was then that he changed into a horse with exactly the same coat as that of my original mount. I'm greatly indebted to him for taking me over mountains and summits and through the most treacherous passages. Whether it be carrying me on my way there or bearing the scriptures upon our return, we're much beholden to his strength."

On hearing these words, Taizong complimented him profusely before asking again, "This long trek to the Western Region, exactly how far is it?"

Tripitaka said, "I recall that the Nun told us that the distance was a hundred and eight thousand miles. I didn't make a careful record on the way. All I know is that we've experienced fourteen seasons of heat and cold. We encountered mountains and ridges daily; the forests we came upon were not small, and the waters we met were wide and swift. We also went through many kingdoms whose rulers had affixed their seals and signatures on our document." Then he called out: "Disciples, bring up the travel rescript and present it to our Lord."

It was handed over immediately. Taizong took a look and realised that the document had been issued on the third day before the full moon, in the ninth month of the thirteenth year during the Zhenguan reign period. Smiling, Taizong said, "We've caused you the trouble of taking a long journey. This is now the twenty-seventh year of the Zhenguan period!" The travel rescript bore the seals of the Precious Image Kingdom, the Black Rooster Kingdom, the Cart Slow Kingdom, the Kingdom of Women in Western Liang, the Sacrifice Kingdom, the Scarlet-Purple Kingdom, the Beggar Kingdom, the Religion-Destroying Kingdom. There were also the seals of the Phoenix-Mortal Prefecture, the Jade-Flower County, and the Gold-Level Prefecture. After reading through the document, Taizong put it away.

Soon the officer in attendance to the throne arrived to invite them to the banquet. As the emperor took the hand of Tripitaka and walked down the steps of the hall, he asked once more, "Are your noble disciples familiar with the etiquette of the court?"

"My humble disciples," replied Tripitaka, "all began their careers as monsters deep in the wilds or a mountain village, and they have never been instructed in the etiquette of China's sage court. I beg my Lord to pardon them."

Smiling, Taizong said, "We'll not blame them! We'll not blame them! Let's all go to the feast set up in the East Hall."

Tripitaka thanked him once more before calling for his three disciples to join them. Upon their arrival at the hall, they saw that the opulence of the great nation of China was indeed different from all ordinary kingdoms. See the doorway overhung with brocade. The floor adorned with red carpets, the whirls of exotic incense, and fresh victuals most rare. The amber cups and crystal goblets are gold-trimmed and jade-set; the gold platters and white-jade bowls are patterned and silver-rimmed. The tubers thoroughly cooked, the taros sugar-coated; sweet, lovely button mushrooms, unusual, pure seaweeds. Bamboo shoots, ginger-spiced, are served a few times; Malva leafs, honey-drenched, are mixed several ways. Wheat-glutens fried with Xiang-Chun leaves: <sup>2</sup>wood-ears cooked with bean-curd skins. Rock ferns and fairy plants; fern flour and dried Wei-leaves. <sup>3</sup>Radishes cooked with Sichuan peppercorns; melon strands stirred with mustard powder. These few vegetarian dishes are so-so but the many rare fruits quite steal the show! Walnuts, persimmons, longans and lychees. The chestnuts of Yizhou and Shandong's dates; the South's Ginko fruits and hare-head pears. Pine-seeds, lotus-seeds, giant grapes; Fei-nuts, <sup>4</sup>melon seeds, and water chestnuts. Chinese olives, <sup>5</sup>wild apples; crab-apples, Pyrus-pears; tender stalks, <sup>6</sup>young lotus roots; crisp plums, and Chinese strawberries. Not 1 species is missing or wanting. There are moreover the steamed 1000-sheet vanilla slice, honeyed pastries, fine viands; and there are also the lovely juices, fragrant teas, and strange dainties. An endless spread of one hundred flavours, true noble fare. Western barbarians with great China can never compare! Master and three disciples were grouped together with the officials, both civil and military, on both sides of the emperor Taizong who took the seat in the middle. The dancing and the poems proceeded in an orderly and solemn manner, and in this way they enjoyed themselves thoroughly for one whole day. Truly the royal banquet rivals the sage kings': true scriptures acquired bring excess blessings. Forever these will prosper and remain as god's light shines on the king's domain. When it became late, the officials thanked the emperor; while Taizong withdrew into his palace, the various officials returned to their residences. The Tang Monk and his disciples however, went to the Temple of Great Blessing where they were met by the resident priests respecting. As they entered the temple gate, the priests said, "Master, the top of these trees were all suddenly pointing eastward this morning. We remembered your words and hurried out to the city to meet you. Indeed, you did arrive!"

The elder could not have been more pleased as they were ushered into the abbot's quarters. By then, 8 Rules was not clamouring at all for food or tea, nor did he indulge in any mischief. Both Pilgrim and Sand-monk behaved most properly, for they had become naturally quiet and reserved since the Dao in them had come to fruition. They rested that night. Taizong held court next morning and said to the officials, "We didn't sleep the whole night when we reflected on how great and profound has been the merit of our brother, such that no compensation is quite adequate. We finally composed in our head several homely sentences as a mere token of our gratitude but they have not yet been written down." Calling for one of the secretaries from the Central Drafting Office, he said, "Come, let us recite our composition for you, and you write it down sentence by sentence." The composition<sup>7</sup> was as follows:

We've heard how the Dyadic Models<sup>8</sup> which manifest themselves in Heaven and Earth in the production of life are represented by images whereas the invisible powers of the four seasons bring about transformation of things through the hidden action of heat and cold. By scanning Heaven and Earth, therefore, even the most ignorant may perceive their rudimentary laws. Even the thorough understanding of *yin* and *yang* however, has seldom enabled the worthy and wise to comprehend fully their ultimate principle. It is easy to recognise that Heaven and Earth do contain *yin* and *yang* because there are images. It is difficult to comprehend fully how *yin* and *yang* pervade Heaven and Earth because the forces themselves are invisible. That images may manifest the minute is a fact that does not perplex even the foolish whereas forms hidden in what is invisible are what confuses even the learned.

How much more difficult it is, therefore, to understand the way of Religion that exalts the void, uses the dark, and exploits the silent in order to succour the myriad grades of living things and exercise control over the entire world. Its spiritual authority is the highest, and its divine potency has no equal. Its magnitude impregnates the entire cosmos; there is no space so tiny that it does not permeate it. Birth-less and deathless, it does not age after a thousand kalpas; half-hidden and half-manifest, it brings one hundred blessings even now. A wondrous way most mysterious, those who follow it cannot know its limit. A law flowing silent and deep, those who draw on it cannot fathom its source. How, therefore, could those benighted ordinary mortals not be perplexed if they tried to plumb its depths? Now, this great Religion arose in the Land of the West. It soared to the court of the Han period in the form of a radiant dream,<sup>9</sup> which flowed with its mercy to enlighten the Eastern territory. In antiquity, during the time when form and abstraction were clearly distinguished, the words of a god, even before spreading, had already established their goodly influence. In a generation when he was both frequently active in and withdrawn from the world, the people beheld his virtue and honoured it. But when he returned to Extinguishment and generations passed by, the golden images concealed his true form and did not reflect the light of the universe. The beautiful paintings though unfolding lovely portraits, vainly held up the figure of 32 marks. <sup>10</sup>Nonetheless his subtle doctrines spread far and wide to save men and beasts from the three unhappy paths, and his traditions were widely proclaimed to lead all creatures through the ten stages toward God-hood.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, a god made scriptures that could be divided into the Great and the Small Vehicles. He also possessed the Law that could be transmitted either in the correct or in the deviant method. Our priest Xuanzang, a Master of the Law, is a leader within the Gate of Law. Devoted and intelligent since his youth, he realised early the merit of the three forms of emptiness.<sup>12</sup> When grown he comprehended the principles of the spiritual, including first the practice of the four forms of patience.<sup>13</sup> Neither the pine in the wind nor the moon mirrored in water can compare with his purity and radiance. Even the dew of Heaven and luminous gems cannot surpass the clarity and refinement of his person. His intelligence encompassed even those elements which seemingly had no relations, and his spirit could perceive that which had yet to take visible forms. Having transcended the lure of the six senses, he was such an outstanding figure that in all the past he had no rival. He concentrated his mind on the internal verities, mourning all the time the mutilation of the correct doctrines. Worrying over the mysteries, he lamented that even the most profound treatises had errors. He thought of revising the teachings and reviving certain arguments, so as to disseminate what he had received to a wider audience. He would, moreover, strike out the erroneous and preserve the true to enlighten the students. For this reason he longed for the Pure Land and a pilgrimage to the Western Territories. Risking dangers he set out on a long journey with only his staff for his companion on this solitary expedition. Snow drifts in the morning would blanket his roadway; sand storms at dusk would blot out the horizon. Over ten thousand miles of mountains and streams he proceeded, pushing aside mist and smoke. Through a thousand alternations of heat and cold he advanced amidst frost and rain. As his zeal was great, he considered his task a light one, for he was determined to succeed. He toured throughout the Western World for fourteen years, <sup>14</sup>going to all the foreign nations in quest of the proper doctrines. He led the life of an ascetic beneath twin Śāla trees<sup>15</sup> and by the 8 rivers of India. <sup>16</sup>At the Deer Park and on the Vulture Peak he beheld the strange and searched out the different. He received ultimate truths from the senior sages and was taught the true doctrines by the highest worthies. Penetrating into the mysteries, he mastered the most profound lessons. The way of the Triyāna and 6 Commandments he learned by heart; 100 cases of scriptures forming the canon flowed like waves from his lips. Though the countries he visited were innumerable, the scriptures he succeeded in acquiring had a definite number. Of those important texts of the Mahayana he received there are 35 titles<sup>17</sup> in altogether 5048 scrolls. When they are translated and spread through China, they will proclaim<sup>18</sup> the surpassing merit of Religion, drawing the cloud of mercy from the Western extremity to shower the religion-rain on the Eastern region. The Holy Religion, once incomplete, is now returned to perfection. The multitudes, once full of sins, are now brought back to blessing. Like that which quenches the fire in a burning house, <sup>19</sup>Religion works to save humanity lost on its way to perdition. Like a golden beam shining on darkened waters, <sup>20</sup>it leads the voyagers to ascend safely the other shore. Thus we know that the wicked will fall because of their iniquities but the virtuous will rise because of their karmic affinities. The root causes of such rise and fall are all self-made by man. Consider the cinnamon flourishing high on the mountain, its flowers nourished by cloud and mist, or the lotus growing atop the green waves, its leaves unsoiled by dust. This is not because the lotus is by nature clean or because the cinnamon itself is chaste but because what the cinnamon depends on for its existence is lofty, and thus it will not be weighed down by trivia; and because what the lotus relies on is pure, and thus impurity cannot stain it. Since even the vegetable kingdom that is itself without intelligence, knows that excellence comes from an environment of excellence, how can humans who understand the great relations not search for well-being by following well-being? May these scriptures abide forever as the sun and moon and may the blessings they confer spread throughout the universe!

After the secretary had finished writing this treatise, the sage monk was summoned. At the time, the elder was already waiting outside the gate of the court. When he heard the summons, he hurried inside and saluted himself to pay homage to the emperor. Taizong asked him to ascend the hall and handed him the document. When he had finished reading it, the priest went to his knees again to express his gratitude. "The style and rhetoric of my Lord," said the priest, "are lofty and classical while the reasoning in the treatise is both profound and subtle. I'd like to know however, whether a title has been chosen for this composition."

"We composed it orally last night,"<sup>21</sup> replied Taizong, "as a token of thanks to our royal brother. Will it be acceptable if I title this 'Preface to the Holy Religion'?" The elder respected and thanked him profusely. Once more Taizong said, "*Our talents pale before the imperial tablets and our words cannot match the bronze and stone inscriptions. <sup>22</sup>As for the esoteric texts, our ignorance thereof is even greater. Our treatise orally composed is actually quite unpolished – like mere spilled ink on tablets of gold. Or broken tiles in a forest of pearls. Writing it in self-interest, we've quite ignored even embarrassment. It is not worth your notice and you'd not thank us.*"

All the officials present however, congratulated the emperor and made arrangements immediately to promulgate the royal essay on Holy Religion inside and outside the capital. Taizong said, "We'd like to ask the royal brother to recite the true scriptures for us. How about it?"

"My Lord," said the elder, "if you want me to recite the true scriptures, we must find the proper religious site. The treasure palace is no place for recitation." Exceedingly pleased, Taizong asked his attendants, "Among the monasteries of Chang'an that is the purest one?"

From among the ranks stepped forth the Grand Secretary, Xiao Yu who said, "The Wild-Goose Pagoda Temple<sup>23</sup> in the city is purest of all." At once Taizong gave this command to the various officials:

"Each of you take several scrolls of these true scriptures and go reverently with us to the Wild-Goose Pagoda Temple. We want to ask our royal brother to expound the scriptures to us." Each of the officials indeed took up several scrolls and followed the emperor's carriage to the temple. A lofty platform with proper appointments was then erected. As before, the elder told 8 Rules and Sand-monk to hold the dragon horse and mind the luggage while Pilgrim was to serve him by his side. Then he said to Taizong, "If my Lord would like to circulate the true scriptures throughout his empire, copies should be made before they are dispersed. We'd treasure the originals and not handle them lightly."

Smiling, Taizong said, "The words of our royal brother are most appropriate! Most appropriate!"

He thereupon ordered the officials in the Hanlin Academy and the Central Drafting Office to make copies of the true scriptures. For them he also erected another temple east of the capital and named it the Temple for Imperial Transcription. The elder had already taken several scrolls of scriptures and mounted the platform. He was just about to recite them when he felt a gust of fragrant wind. In mid-air the Eight Lightning Guardians revealed themselves and cried, "Reciters, drop your scripture scrolls and follow us back to the West."

From below, Pilgrim and his two companions together with the white horse immediately rose into the air. The elder, too abandoned the scriptures and rose from the platform. They all left soaring through the air. So startled were Taizong and the many officials that they all saluted down toward the sky. Thus it was that *since scriptures were the sage monk's ardent quest, he went on 14 years throughout the West a bitter journey full of trials and woes with many streams and mountains as his foes. Nine merits more were added to 8 times 9; his 3000 works did on the great world shine. The wondrous texts brought back to the noble state would in the East until now circulate.* After Taizong and many officials had finished their worship, they immediately set about the selection of high priests so that a Grand Mass of Land and Water could be held right in that Wild-Goose Pagoda Temple. Furthermore, they were to read and recite the true scriptures from the Great Canon in order that the damned spirits would be delivered from nether darkness and the celebration of good works be multiplied. The copies of transcribed scriptures would also be promulgated throughout the empire. The 8 Great Lightning-Guardians mounted the fragrant wind to lead the elder, his 3 disciples, and the white horse back to Spirit Mountain. The round trip was made precisely within a period of eight days. At that

time the various divinities of Spirit Mountain were all assembled before God to listen to his lecture. Ushering master and disciples before his presence, the Eight Lightning Guardians said, “Your disciples by your golden decree have escorted the sage monk and his companions back to the Tang nation. The scriptures have been handed over. We now return to surrender your decree.” The Tang Monk and his disciples were then told to approach the throne of God to receive their appointments. “Sage Monk,” said Siddhartha, “in your previous disciple you’re originally my second disciple named Master Gold Cicada. Because you failed to listen to my exposition of the law and slighted my great teaching, your true spirit was banished to find another disciple in the Land of the East. Happily you submitted and, by remaining faithful to our teaching, succeeded in acquiring the true scriptures. For such magnificent merit, you’ll receive a great promotion to become a god of Candana Merit. Sun Wukong, when you caused great disturbance at the Celestial Palace, I’d to exercise enormous religion power to have you pressed beneath the Mountain of Five Phases. Fortunately your Heaven-sent calamity came to an end and you embraced the Religious religion. I’m pleased even more by the fact that you’re devoted to the scourging of evil and the exaltation of good. Throughout your journey you made great merit by smelting the demons and defeating the fiends. For being faithful in the end as you’re in the beginning, I hereby give you the grand promotion and appoint you a god Victorious in Strife. Bullseye Aware of Ability, you’re originally an aquatic deity of the Heavenly River, the Marshal of Heavenly Reeds. For getting drunk during the Festival of Mortal Peaches and insulting the divine maiden, you’re banished to a disciple in the Region Below that would give you the body of a beast. Fortunately you still cherished and loved the human form so that even when you sinned at the Cloudy Paths Cave in Fulling Mountain, you eventually submitted to our great religion and embraced our vows. Although you protected the sage monk on his way, you’re still quite mischievous, for greed and lust were never wholly extinguished in you. For the merit of toting the luggage however, I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you Janitor of the Altars.” “They’ve all become Gods!” shouted 8 Rules. “Why I’m alone made Janitor of the Altars?” “Because you’re still talkative, lazy,” replied Siddhartha, “and you retain an enormous appetite. Within the four great continents of the world, there’re many people who observe our religion. Whenever there’re Religious services, you’ll be asked to clear the altars. That’s an appointment that offers you plenty of enjoyment. How’d it be bad? Sand Awakened to Purity, you’re originally the Great Curtain-Raising Captain. Because you broke a crystal chalice during the Festival of Mortal Peaches, you’re banished to the Region below where at the River of Flowing-Sand you sinned by devouring humans. Fortunately you submitted to our religion and remained firm in your faith. As you escorted the sage monk, you made merit by leading his horse over all those mountains. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you the Golden-Bodied Arhat.” Then he said to the white horse, “You’re originally the prince of Dragon King Guangjin of the Western Ocean. Because you disobeyed your dad’s command and committed the crime of unfiliality, you’re to be executed. Fortunately you made submission to the Law and accepted our vows. Because you carried the sage monk daily on your back during his journey to the West and took the Holy Scriptures back to the East also, you’ve made merit, too. I hereby grant you promotion and appoint you one of the dragons belonging to the Eight Classes of Supernatural Beings.”<sup>24</sup> The elder, his 3 disciples, and the horse all respected to thank a god who ordered some of the guardians to take the horse to the Dragon-Transforming Pool at the back of the Spirit Mountain. After being pushed into the pool, the horse stretched himself, and in a little while he shed his coat, horns began to grow on his head, golden scales appeared all over his body, and silver whiskers emerged on his cheeks. His whole body shrouded in auspicious air and his four paws wrapped in hallowed clouds, he soared out of the pool and circled inside the monastery gate on top of 1 of the Pillars that Support Heaven. As the various Gods gave praise to the great religion of Siddhartha, Pilgrim Sun said also to the Tang Monk, “Master, I’ve become a god now just like you. It can’t be that I still must wear a golden fillet! And you’d not want to clamp my head still by reciting that so-called Tight-Fillet Spell, would you? Recite the Loose-Fillet Spell quickly and get it off my head. I’m going to smash it to pieces so that that so-called Nun can use it no more to play tricks on other people.” “Because you’re difficult to control previously,” said the Tang Monk, “this method had to be used to restrain you. Now that you’ve become a god, naturally it’ll be gone. How’d it be still on your head? Try touching your head and see.” Pilgrim raised his hand and felt along his head, and indeed the fillet had vanished. So at that time, Candana, Victorious in Strife, Janitor of the Altars, and Golden-Bodied Arhat all assumed the position of their own rightful fruition. The Heavenly dragon-horse too returned to mortality and a testimonial poem for them says:

1 Real Body dropped to the dusty plain fuses with 4 Signs to tend the self again.<sup>25</sup>  
In 5 Phases terms forms are dead and void; the fiends’ vain names 1 should all avoid.  
Great Complete Liberation’s the right Candana fruition; appointments crown this rise from perdition.  
Gracious light of scriptures now worldwide dilates as 5 sages live within Advaya’s gates.

At the time when these 5 sages assumed their positions, the various Religious Patriarchs, Nuns, sage priests, Arhats, guardians, Beggars, and worshippers, the mortals of various mountains and caves, the grand divinities, the gods of Darkness and Light, the Sentinels, the Guardians of Monasteries, and all the mortals and preceptors who had attained the Way all came to listen to the proclamation before retiring to their proper stations. Look now at *coloured mists crowding the Spirit Vulture Peak and hallowed clouds gathered in the world of bliss. Gold dragons safely sleeping, Jade tigers resting in peace; black hares scampering freely, Snakes and turtles circling at will. Phoenixes, red and blue, gambol pleasantly; black apes and white deer saunter happily. Strange flowers of 8 periods, divine fruits of 4 seasons, hoary pines, old junipers, jade cypresses, and aged bamboos. 5-coloured plums often blossoming and bearing fruit; millennial peaches frequently ripening and fresh. 1000 flowers and fruits vying for beauty; a whole sky full of auspicious mists.* Pressing their palms together to indicate their devotion, the holy congregation all recited: “I submit to Dipamkara, a god of Antiquity. Bhaiṣajya-vaidūrya-prabhāsa, the Physician and Crystal Lights. A god. The Past, Present, and Future. The Pure Joy. The Vairocana. The King of the Precious Banner. The Maitreya, the honoured one. The Infinite Light. Sukhāvatīvyūha, the Infinite Life who receives and Leads to Mortality. The Diamond Indestructibility. Sun, the Precious Light. The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness, the Race of Honourable Dragon Kings. The Zealous Progress and Virtue. Moon-Prabha, the Precious Moonlight. The Presence without Ignorance. Varuna, the Sky and Water, the Narayana. The Radiant Meritorious Works. The Talented Meritorious Works. Welcoming, the Well-Departed. The Candana Light. The Jewelled Banner. The Light of Wisdom Torch. The Light of Sea-Virtue. The Great Mercy Light. The King of Compassion-Power. The Leader of the Sages. The Vast Solemnity. The Golden Radiance. The Luminous Gifts. The Victorious in Wisdom. The Quiescent Light of the World. The Light of the Sun and Moon. The Light of the Sun-and-Moon Pearl. The King of the Victorious Banner. The Wondrous Tone and Sound. The Banner of Permanent Light. The Lamp that Scans the World. The King of Surpassing Religion. The Sumeru Light. The King of Great Wisdom. The Golden Sea Light. The Great Perfect Light. The Gift of Light. The Candana Merit. The Victorious in Strife. The Guanshiyin. The Great Power-Coming. The Beautiful one with Glory and Auspiciousness. The Auspicious World and other Nuns. The various ones of the Great Pure Ocean. The Lotus Pool and Ocean Assembly. The various in the Western Heaven of Ultimate Bliss. The Great the three thousand guardians. The Great the five hundred *Arhats*. The Beggar Lady. The Boundless and Limitless Religion. The Diamond Great Scholar-Sage. The Janitor of the Altars. The Golden-Bodied Arhat of eight Jewels. The Vast Strength, the Heavenly Dragon of the eight Divisions of Supernatural Beings. Such are these various Gods in all the worlds. *I wish to use these merits to adorn God’s pure land – repay fourfold grace above and save those on three paths below. If there’re those who see and hear, their minds will find enlightenment. Their births with us in paradise will be this body’s recompense. All the gods of past, present, future in all the world, the various Honoured Nuns and Greater Good, Great Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom!*”

APPENDIX

The Great Sage Monkey devised a scheme to obtain the Banana-leaf Fan and cool the flames. In this he merely uses his physical strength. The 48 millennia (the Tang and the Song dynasties) are the amassed roots of desire. To become enlightened and open to the Great Way, 1 must 1<sup>st</sup> empty and destroy the roots of desire. To empty and destroy the roots of desire 1 must 1<sup>st</sup> go inside desire. After going inside desire and seeing its emptiness, 1 can then go outside it and realise the reality of the root of the Way. *The Tower of Myriad Mirrors* deals with the Demon of Desire and the Demon of Desire’s the Qing Fish. Mencius said, “There’s no better way of learning than to seek your own strayed heart.” This is the main point of departure. For men, desire’s a demon without form or sound – a man may not be conscious of it or know about it. It may enter by way of grief, indulgence, a single doubtful or vacillating thought, or sensory perceptions. It seems as if the desire that enters the sphere of 1’s thoughts can’t be stopped or changed or ignored; as if once it enters it can in no way be expelled. But to recognise desire as a demon is to achieve success. Therefore when the Great Sage’s in the belly of the Qing Fish, he didn’t know it. Moreover, he didn’t know when he leapt out of the Qing Fish that he’d shortly kill it. The deluded man and the enlightened 1 weren’t 2 different people. *The Tower of Myriad Mirrors* is a dream of desire. If for example, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> month, you see in a dream that you’ll be in a fight and receive wounds to your hands and feet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month and when the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month arrives and you’re in fact in a fight, what your eyes see is no different from what you dreamed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> month is not the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> month. Rather, what you dreamed and saw is an indication that there’s no place the heart can’t reach. And since there’s no place the heart can’t reach, it can’t really be left to stray. When the heart goes into the future, it’s in a most precarious situation. If 1 doesn’t fortify his spirit, he’s sure to be utterly defeated. By exterminating the 6 Thieves, Monkey expelled evil. Punishing Qin Kuei established his direction. In paying respect to Yüeh Fei he returned to the right. This is basically how the Great Sage broke out of the Demon Desire. *The Supreme and Venerable Commander for Wiping out Desire*. The roots of desire in this world can be summed up in 1 word: *sorrow*. Dream thoughts are upside-down. The *Purity Sutra* says that when chaos runs its course, there’s a return to the root. When desire reaches its extremity, you see your own nature. In killing desire, 1 must be prepared to cut it in half with a single stroke. Here is the author’s intention: If the Great Sage hadn’t encountered the men who dug holes in heaven, he’d never have entered the Demon of Desire. 4 words – young, delicate, almost human – precisely describe the shape this foremost demon’s assumed since the beginning of time.